

Evaluation of five Humanitarian Programs of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and of the Standby Roster NORCAP

Case Country Report - Pakistan

Ternstrom Consulting
in collaboration with Channel Research
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Ternstrom Consulting



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This report is the product of its authors, and responsibility for the accuracy of data included in this report rests with the authors. The findings, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of EVAL.

Täby, 2013

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Acronyms and abbreviations

DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DfID	Department for International Development (UK Aid)
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Office
EFSD	Emergency Food Security Distribution
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
FDMA	Federal Disaster Management Authority
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HO	Head Office
ICLA	Information, Counselling and Legal Advice
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
NFI	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMFA	Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NOK	Norwegian Kroner
Norad	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NORCAP	Norwegian Capacity
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
PaRRSA	Provincial Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Settlement Authority
PDMA	Provincial Disaster Monitoring Authority
PDU	Programme Development Unit
PETS	Public Expenditure Tracking Survey
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRSP	Sarhad Rural Support Programme
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Executive Summary

This Case Country Report Pakistan is part of an evaluation of five core competencies of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and NORCAP (Norwegian Capacity) commissioned by Norad. Its prime purpose is to generate evidence and field-based data regarding NRC operations. Such evidence will then be used as the basis for findings, conclusions and recommendations in the overall synthesis report. Recommendations presented below are therefore primarily country-specific. Recommendations of a more systemic nature will be presented in the synthesis report.

The overall objective guiding NRC's work is: "to enhance protection and promote the rights of the displaced people in humanitarian need by improving living conditions and seeking durable solutions". NRC has responded to this principle in the implementation of its core competency programmes in Pakistan as follows.

Overall Finding

The overall finding of this case country study is that NRC has enhanced the protection and improved the living conditions of internally displaced persons and refugees in a highly complex and dynamic operating environment, where multiple changes in context have necessitated a largely responsive operational modality. The response has covered five sectors of support across a wide geographical area, responding in the highest areas of need and in some areas where few other actors are present. Beneficiaries, communities and external partners consulted as part of this evaluation were overwhelmingly positive in their response to NRC's work.

Non-Food Item Distribution

NRC's Non-Food stock is composed of items according to Cluster recommendations and international standards. Beneficiary targeting is oriented to the most vulnerable families: women, children, disabled and elderly-headed households and low income families.

Beneficiary interviews confirm the effectiveness of the Distribution intervention: items provided in the kits were in line with people's needs and the items were used for the intended purpose – although some beneficiaries noted that they were insufficient to cover large families and that the quality of some items was not good. Mobile phones were particularly appreciated by beneficiaries as a means to keep in contact with their families without incurring expensive travel costs and to receive information updates from aid agencies.

Shelter

NRC's emergency shelter response has been relevant, effective and efficient, providing needed protection against the elements. Shelter intervention modalities are evolving flexibly to meet the needs of Internally Displaced Persons. Implementation is area and context specific and aims toward durable solutions, where feasible. Programming is well coordinated with other service providers, seeks to involve beneficiaries and adapts to needs, including examples of sustainability and exit.

There are examples of quality gaps and beneficiary displeasure with design. Such problems are being addressed although generally in specifications for the next project, not correcting where the problem arose.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

WASH has been introduced as a new Core Competency only in early 2012 and so far there is little to assess. Mainly, beneficiaries have appreciated the inclusion of washroom facilities in permanent housing as well as hygiene awareness campaigns in off-camp sites and return

areas in camps where hygiene items are distributed in the NFI kits. While these may well have contributed to a healthy environment with no major outbreak of communicable diseases there is no evidence of such results because NRC has not documented its monitoring. The installation of water points for drinking and irrigation has been relevant for return communities while flood protection walls have yet to prove their use.

Information, Counselling and Legal Aid

NRC has been particularly successful in helping Internally Displaced Persons to obtain National Identify Cards, essential for their access to humanitarian assistance and to other national civil rights – while recognizing that governmental bureaucratic obstacles prevent full coverage. The provision of National Identity Cards made them eligible to receive Government of Pakistan's cash compensation through the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and Wattan Card in KP and FATA. Information, Counselling and Legal Aid has also been a relevant and effective return monitoring tool in Bajaur. Given that Pakistan is not a signatory to the 1951 Status on the Convention of Refugees (the main legal instrument safeguarding the rights of refugees), Afghan refugees in Pakistan would not have reliable legal redress to their problems without information, counselling and legal aid support. The programme is a highly effective protection instrument, appreciated by its beneficiaries.

Cross-cutting issues

NRC is the first to acknowledge that accessing women continues to be a challenge for the provision of aid in Pakistan on account of strict cultural norms which restrict communication, visibility and contact. The problem is even evident in camps such as Jalojai (where access to women is greater than in FATA), resulting in limited participation of women in beneficiary surveys and participatory exercises. However, women beneficiaries reached in the evaluation through the use of local female enumerators indicated that their needs were being met in terms of Shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene and non-food items.

Despite women and children constituting the great majority of the target population, little information is known about their specific protection needs and concerns, particularly in key areas such as FATA. Gender-based violence, including sexual violence, has been reported through other humanitarian agencies in areas of NRC's operations but the response has been limited due to cultural sensitivities. NRC globally does not address Gender-based violence issues except pilot programs none of which are in Pakistan.

NRC is aware that it needs to build a more representative presence of female staff and community workers who can provide a more realistic picture on gender and child-specific needs. Currently, women comprise less than 10% of NRC staff.

Insufficient efforts have been made to meet the needs of disabled and elderly people who have trouble accessing aid at distribution points. Toilets in reconstructed homes have not been adapted to disabled people where necessary.

NRC staff interviewed described the elaborate system of checks and balances in NRC procedures, especially procurement, aimed at minimising corruption. Never the less, the operational environment implies that risks abound for nepotism and diversion of aid and more regular beneficiary verification surveys would minimise the risk of including undeserving individuals or families in programmes or excluding deserving people.

A key challenge is that NRC's rapid expansion over the past few years has compounded the challenges for staff at Oslo Head Office (HO) to effectively follow and respond to financial and procurement oversight of Country offices. Controllers at HO are responsible for one or more countries, resulting in a large amount of projects to monitor. The possibility for the Controller to monitor project details is therefore very limited. Monitoring takes place on overall country level rather than on project level, raising the possibility that some staff could, in very nuanced and invisible ways, be under pressure to favour certain suppliers or allow corruption within the procurement system. NRC's zero tolerance policy was mentioned

several times in staff interviews as being closely adhered to in the country office and should minimise such occurrences.

Relevance

NRC's shelter, Non Food Items distributions and Water Sanitation and Hygiene interventions have, according to beneficiaries, been relevant and potentially life-saving: internally displaced persons and conflict-affected families whose houses had been destroyed or damaged were forced to live in the open before NRC and other agencies could intervene. NRC has helped beneficiaries to cope with their daily challenges with greater dignity, strengthening their coping mechanisms, preventing further migration to areas with greater access to assistance and preventing health deterioration caused by living out in the open.

There is very little documentation on intervention rationale, i.e. providing evidence of why the intervention is relevant to needs. NRC appears not to have conducted baseline surveys that would be useful to measure project progress and results. Baseline studies may have been conducted jointly or individually by other agencies and NRC should refer to these where appropriate. If no baseline study has been conducted by other agencies, NRC should undertake these in their areas of responsibility and use to measure progress in combination with behavioural change monitoring such as that captured in Knowledge, Attitude and Practice surveys.

NRC staff is institutionally aware of the need for conflict-sensitive programming, highly relevant to the conflict and violence contexts. Meanwhile, staff knowledge of assumptions underlying programming choices and the drivers for and against change are not documented systematically, reducing learning and programme quality. Baseline data is lacking for all projects reviewed.

Effectiveness

NRC interventions have been effective in providing beneficiaries with the means to survive with dignity. For example, shelter activities have provided safe and protective homes for people at different stages of displacement and return. The choice of modality (tents or permanent 'hard' housing structures), made in different areas and contexts, was rational and effective.

NRC has a good record of reaching its target population in all of the five core competencies. Overall, NRC achieved an average of 95% of its project targets in 2011, reaching an impressive number of beneficiaries. It has also been able to train almost equal numbers of men and women community representatives for ICLA capacity-building.

WASH interventions are still modest but have been effective in providing needed access to water combined with hygiene awareness training in off-camp sites and return areas, for irrigation in return areas, and washrooms included in permanent shelter. However, the effectiveness of WASH interventions needs to be assessed according to their ability to reduce hygiene-related illnesses and NRC is unable to produce baseline or periodic mortality and morbidity data to prove this. _

Similarly, NRC has not produced hard evidence that any of its projects achieve the results intended. For example, the objective of a 2011 non-food item distribution project was "to provide protection and support self-sufficiency of the conflict-affected population through the provision of Non-food Items (NFIs)", but this objective is not measureable. No baseline data was collected before or after the project to determine on what grounds the objective was necessary or how it was being met. Project documents (narratives, logframes and reports) do not place enough emphasis on tracking outcomes and are more geared to documenting outputs. This mirrors programming which is output, not outcome focused.

NRC's strategy of placing nationals in senior positions has effectively ensured that these staff can travel to areas with difficult access to ensure greater accountability and monitoring of programme implementation.

Communities have benefited from training in Disaster Risk Reduction activities conducted in Jalojai camp prior to their return. Given the disaster-prone areas where NRC works and based on positive results to date, it should mainstream these activities in its programming to reinforce community resilience more systematically.

Efficiency

NRC Pakistan has a demonstrated focus on cost efficiency which it is able to achieve through economies of scale and through periodic cost comparisons with other agencies. For example, in 2011 it conducted a shelter analysis and cost comparison with all major agencies working for shelter projects in Pakistan. The analysis revealed that NRC one-room shelter with a kitchen and washroom was a cost-efficient intervention compared with other agencies. On the other hand some beneficiaries raised concerns regarding the quality of some non-food items.

NRC has systems in place to efficiently manage its operational activities and human resources. The system provides overall guidance via the annual strategy process as well as detailed work planning, including standardised logframes, at project level. However, it lacks planning at the intermediate, programme level, making it very difficult to get a grasp of overall operations at country level by core competency. These structural issues will be further discussed in the synthesis report.

The systems examined generate clear and transparent project documents, Standard Operating Procedures for every aspect of work (procurement, finance, distribution etc.) and pre-set templates to allow comparison across projects and sectors. Cost-tracking at field office level is done by project managers working closely with finance managers, but focus is on deviation from the implementation plan, less on overall efficiency.

The volume of data generated by NRC field offices, occasioned by its rapid growth, is too much for the Oslo HO staff to handle efficiently resulting in "spot-check" based financial oversight. The Core Activities Database has not yet been rolled out in Pakistan and the evaluation team has since been informed that the system is being replaced globally.

NRC staff is well-trained, through mandatory induction courses on recruitment and periodic training or refresher courses that meet the demands of their work. However, rapid growth in staffing has placed strains on the system of staff training which needs to be scaled up. Programmes within each geographical area are closely integrated with each other, promoting cost-effectiveness and coherence across sectors.

Sustainability

NRC's programmes link relief with durable solutions, which in most cases translate to return of both internally displaced persons and Afghan refugees. Providing durable shelter to returnees, combined with a one-time non-food item distribution, is a rational return incentive for the displaced in Jalojai camp and elsewhere. Information and counselling to Afghan refugees is a sound investment to help them decide their future strategies and is linked to similar NRC programmes in Afghanistan where they may be able to solve some of their legal problems, such as housing, land and property tenure, on return.

Main recommendations

Baseline surveys should be conducted in conjunction with needs assessments prior to project interventions and should be used systematically as key planning and monitoring tools.

Features to assist the elderly and disabled should be added to individual shelter washrooms.

Female staff should be prioritised in recruitment with the aim of achieving a greater gender balance.

Disaster Risk Reduction activities should be extended to more people in return and 'stayee' areas where disasters are likely to occur, to improve community resilience.

Accountability to Beneficiaries: Systems should be put in place to solicit beneficiary feedback, which should be documented and followed up.

In order to maximise impact, strategic planning processes should include desired outcomes, such as improved beneficiary health, using measurable indicators. Results, not activities, should be focus of planning and follow-up.

NRC is putting in place a new system to replace the Core Activities Database. This new system should be established in Peshawar with commensurate training activities to project staff.

1 Introduction and Background

This Case Country Report for Pakistan is part of an evaluation of five core competencies of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and NORCAP commissioned by Norad. Its prime purpose is to generate evidence and field-based data regarding NRC operations. Such evidence will then be used as the basis for findings, conclusions and recommendations in the overall synthesis report. In this report, we focus on findings, and only present recommendations that are highly country specific. Recommendations of a more systemic nature will be presented in the main evaluation report.

The report presents the findings of the evaluation team from its field visit to Pakistan between 14 and 24 November 2012. The reader should be aware that the severe security situation causes restrictions on both NRC's activities and the way the evaluation has been carried out. For example, we have not been able to interact with the target population to the extent that would be normal in an evaluation. We have also had to rely to a large extent on NRC, the organisation being evaluated, for arranging meetings, providing transportation and security details. While this may affect the reliability of results to some extent, it has not been possible to avoid.

1.1 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the evaluation of which this Country Case Study is a part is to 'contribute to the improvement of NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council) and NORCAP (Norwegian Capacity) activities'¹. It aims to provide knowledge about the present and past situation and to facilitate integration of knowledge within NRC and NORCAP through learning.

The evaluation has five objectives: to *i)* assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of five of NRC's core activities in three countries; *ii)* assess the quality of NORCAP responses (relevance and efficiency); *iii)* assess the existence of synergies between NRC and NORCAP activities; *iv)* provide scope for learning at different levels and; *v)* make recommendations regarding *a)* making WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) a new core competence; *b)* improvements in design and implementation of NRC core activities and; *c)* improvements in NORCAP's competencies.

This report addresses mainly the first objective for one of the selected case countries; i.e. to assess the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of five of NRC's core activities in Pakistan. The remaining objectives will be addressed in the main evaluation report, including findings based on interviews with NORCAP secondees, which will be presented together with findings from interviews with NORCAP secondees in other case countries, via Skype and through an online survey.

The evaluation in this case country report covers NRC's activities within its core competencies of Shelter, ICLA (Information, Counselling and Legal Advice), Distribution and WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene). Although the Terms of Reference specify the evaluation of NRC's Camp Management core competency, there are no Camp Management activities in Pakistan. The period to be covered is 2010 to 2012.

The aim of the evaluation is to provide insight into programme design, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation during this period and to assess the *relevance, effectiveness and efficiency* of overall programmes and individual projects. The evaluation team has sought to examine not just what *outputs* have been achieved in country programmes but the wider *outcomes*. All three countries that were selected as country case studies (Somalia, South Sudan and Pakistan) are countries where political and humanitarian situations are highly dynamic and where security challenges can affect NRC programmes as

¹ ToR for the study.

well as evaluation methods. This, together with the nature of NRC's activities, has affected the extent to which it has been possible to examine outcomes.

The main intended users of this report on Pakistan are Norad, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA), Sida², NRC Headquarters and the staff of NRC's country and field offices in Pakistan.

1.2 Country and regional context

Pakistan has been undergoing internal political instability since 2004. The geo-political situation of the country has contributed to a volatile security situation, high poverty levels, low literacy rates and slow economic growth. Since 2008, militancy and government military operations have induced conflict-affected displacements from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas – FATA - into settled areas. In addition, many parts of Pakistan are affected by repeated natural disasters such as heavy floods. There are three main categories of displaced people in Pakistan; Afghan refugees, conflict-related internal displacement and internal displacement caused by natural disasters.

Pakistan has been a generous host to refugees from Afghanistan since the early 1980s, with the number of refugees reaching over 5 million (the highest number of refugees in the world according to UNHCR³) until a concerted repatriation effort started in 2003. Afghan registered refugees remaining in Pakistan today still number over 1.7 million, according to UNHCR and UN Common Appeal data, with a further estimated 2 to 3 million non-registered.⁴

Pakistan has experienced conflict-related displacement since 2004. Displacement reached its peak in 2009 with some three million people displaced due to the conflict in north-western Pakistan. As of September 2011, approximately 1 million people remained displaced. Further conflict-related displacements took place in the Kurram, Orakzai, Khyber and Kohat areas. In 2011 eighty-seven per cent of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) resided with host families in KP, while less than 13 per cent of all IDPs resided in camps. The largest groups of IDPs were from Bajaur (350,000), South Waziristan (273,000) and Mohmand (245,000). As of 2012 only a few hundred IDPs remained in Bajaur and Mohmand while the main displacement nexus is now in South Waziristan, Kurram and Khyber, reflecting the changing nature of displacement.

In the first six months of 2012 a new wave of displacement took place from Khyber Agency to Jalozaï camp in Nowshera with some 10,000 families arriving at the camp in one week. Around 60,000 IDP families have been registered since January 2012, some 19% of whom are living in Jalozaï Camp and the rest with host families. The authorities anticipate significant returns to the Agencies South Waziristan, Orakzai, Kurram and Khyber with a trickle of new displacements occurring at the same time.⁵ However, the levels of destroyed housing and social infrastructure in these areas make the return of individual families slow and uncertain. Damage estimates from Bajaur indicate that as many as 29,000 houses have been totally destroyed as a result of military activity.⁶ While the government compensates individual families for each destroyed house, reconstruction will take time and additional resources from each family.

The 2010 floods affected 77 out of a total of 139 districts in Pakistan. Approximately one-fifth of Pakistan's total land area was under water and some 18-20 million people were directly affected, mostly by destruction of property, livelihoods and infrastructure. Damage to public

² Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

⁴ According to NRC's the 2012-2014 Country Strategy, Early Recovery Framework Appeal and 1 m according to NRC's Pakistan Quarterly Report for third quarter 2012.

⁵ OCHA and Oxfam.

⁶ NRC's Pakistan Strategy 2012 — 2014.

buildings was estimated at USD 1 billion while overall damage was estimated at some USD 6 billion, not counting losses from foregone trade⁷ 1 billion USD.

The floods in July to Sept 2010 were the worst floods in Pakistan's history, and a high proportion of people affected across the country are still facing humanitarian consequences. According to the Government of Pakistan, of the 18 million flood affected people countrywide, 3.8 million people were from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Heavy flooding in 2011 exacerbated the IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) situation.

1.3 NRC in the Local context⁸

In the period under evaluation, NRC focused on flood and conflict-affected IDPs, returnees, stayees and host communities in KP and FATA.

NRC commenced operations in Pakistan in 2001, first as part of the Afghanistan-Pakistan regional programme and as an independent country programme since 2010. The NRC country office is situated in Peshawar with field offices in Quetta, Dera Ismail Khan (D I Khan), Kohat, Nowshera, Charsadda, Mohmand and Bajaur. It has seven international and over 460 national staff. NRC's activities in Pakistan focus on five core activities: Shelter (housing and tents), distribution of non-food items (NFIs), legal assistance, WASH and Education⁹. NRC does not implement Food Security¹⁰ or Camp Management activities in Pakistan. The budgeted forecast for 2012 is over 140 million NOK, making Pakistan one of the largest NRC programmes worldwide.¹¹

Over the period in review NRC implemented projects in the following areas: Peshawar Valley (Swabi, Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda and Peshawar Districts), Kohat, Hangu, Bajaur, Mohmand, Kurram Agency and Baluchistan¹². Its work is conducted within the framework of the following core competencies:

Shelter: NRC has provided IDPs with emergency, transitional and permanent shelters in KP and FATA in response to the July 2010 floods and the ongoing conflict. It established an Emergency Response Team as part of the shelter activities to respond to emerging crises. The Emergency Response Team has been active in FATA, specifically in Kurram Agency, is responding to new conflict and violence related displacement.

WASH: A new activity since the beginning of 2012, NRC drills boreholes for access to clean water and rehabilitates water points in IDP camps, hosting areas and communities of return. New permanent housing constructed by NRC for returnees is equipped with a washroom.

ICLA: ICLA is one of NRC's 'flagship' activities and is operational in KP. Under the ICLA programme IDPs refugee communities have been assisted in obtaining Computerised National Identity Cards, which qualify them for registration for government compensation, social welfare programmes¹³, humanitarian assistance, birth certificates and other important means to enable their access to civil rights. Refugees are given information and counselling

⁷ *Preliminary Damage Estimates from Pakistani Flood Events, 2010*, Michael J. Hicks, Ball State University and Mark L. Burton, University of Tennessee, August 2010.
<http://cber.iweb.bsu.edu/research/PakistanFlood.pdf>.

⁸ Information from this section, including budget data, is drawn from the narrative for NRC project proposal PKFM1201, complemented with key informant interviews with NRC staff.

⁹ Education not included in the ToR of the evaluation.

¹⁰ However, some of the water provided is used for irrigation purposes and could therefore be classified as Food Security rather than WASH.

¹¹ Budget Proposal Overview 2012 Pakistan.

¹² According to 'Project proposal to the NMFA', NRC-145924, PKFM1102 and NRC Pakistan updates.

¹³ Including the Benazir and Watan Card initiatives for subsidized food. Table titled: "Explanation of budget expenditure deviation for Project PKFK1102".

with respect to voluntary repatriation and referred to NRC ICLA programmes in Afghanistan that could assist them further on return.

Education: The Education team was established in 2011 and aims to respond to IDP children's educational needs in KP and FATA. The Education team works closely with the Shelter team, providing Teaching and Learning Materials for schools re-constructed by NRC and other schools in need of assistance. The Education component of NRC programming is excluded from this evaluation.

Emergency Food Security and Distribution: While NRC has not implemented any Emergency Food Security programmes it is active in NFI distribution to IDPs in KP and FATA. Stocks are maintained to respond to sudden emergencies which are frequent in Pakistan¹⁴. Shelter items such as tents may be included in NFI distributions rather than as a distinct Shelter activity.

NRC works closely with a variety of partners including UN agencies and cluster leads (UNHCR, UNICEF¹⁵, OCHA¹⁶), community representatives, beneficiaries, Government in the form of the KP's Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and Provincial Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement Authority (PaRRSA), Federal Disaster Management Authority (FDMA), FATA Secretariat (FS) and Political Administration. Coordination with these and other actors through the clusters enables continuous updating and monitoring of the situation and relatively (as compared to other international non-government organisations) free access to beneficiaries through the Government of Pakistan's granting of No Objection Certificates (NOCs).

NRC receives funding support in Pakistan from DfID¹⁷, NMFA, UNHCR and ECHO¹⁸. In 2011 and 2012 NRC implemented the following projects:

ECHO: Provision of shelter solutions to over 10,000 IDP and conflict affected families, IDPs in KP and FATA, supplemented by NFI kits and including a number of permanent shelters. Tents are provided at the onset of emergency whereas permanent shelter, consisting of a room and toilet, are the long-term solutions. Target beneficiaries are conflict-affected IDPs in areas that have been the least served by NRC and other agencies and include D I Khan, Lower Orakzai, Hangu, Charsadda, Nowshera and Kohat.

UNHCR: Information Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA) for the flood-affected IDPs in Peshawar and Kohat and conflict-affected IDPs in Bajaur and Mohmand through two Welfare and Legal Centres (WLCs). UNHCR has also supported NRC with the provision of 2,500 permanent shelters to IDPs and 700 transitional shelters to refugees.

NMFA: Permanent and Temporary Shelter solutions to IDPs, with particular focus on Mohmand and Bajaur where NRC is providing 820 permanent shelters supplemented by NFIs.

Other Donors: NRC has other funding including from Sida, DfID, Private Donors and Telethon.

Seen in the context of the 2011 United Nations flood response funding appeal for US\$ 356.7, these contributions show a rough estimate of slightly over 4% to NRC of the country's total humanitarian requirements¹⁹. The Pakistan Early Recovery Framework for 2012 appealed for US\$ 439,813,059, of which NRC requested US\$ 4,952,748 or a little over 1% of the total. Significant variation in the NRC share based on geographical region should be noted.

¹⁴ NRC Pakistan Country fact sheet.

¹⁵ United Nations Children's Fund.

¹⁶ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN).

¹⁷ Department for International Development.

¹⁸ European Commission Humanitarian Office.

¹⁹ Pakistan Floods Response Plan, September 2011, United Nations

1.4 Limitations to NRC's operations

The lack of a comprehensive peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly the North-West Frontier Province)/Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has meant an insecure working environment for humanitarian, recovery and development activities, resulting in limitations to humanitarian access - particularly in parts of the Malakand Division and most of FATA. Displacement and return patterns have fluctuated in those areas. Revenge actions by militants in cities of Pakistan have disrupted the working environment for the humanitarian community. Sectarian violence in some Districts and Agencies was a factor contributing to instability.

Political instability and a fragile security situation are major constraining factors for the day-to-day work of NRC and other aid agencies in FATA and in some areas of KP. Expatriate staff cannot visit project areas in FATA and local staff can only monitor activities irregularly. NRC's policy of hiring local staff enables at least a minimum of project monitoring in these areas. Due to these restrictions few international agencies are able to implement projects in FATA.

Access challenges are exacerbated by socio-cultural norms which prevent NRC female staff travelling to FATA areas and meeting with female beneficiaries. Male staff cannot meet female beneficiaries either, due to these restrictions, preventing a gender balance in the consultation process for identification, design and implementation of projects. However, in KP areas, NRC is able to deploy its female staff for direct interaction with female community members to conduct needs assessments and project monitoring.

1.5 Document review²⁰

A large number of documents describing and analysing the general situation in Pakistan and thematically were reviewed prior to the field work, confirming the need for the type of activities that NRC are undertaking in the country. See e.g. the UN Appeals for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 (UN 2010, 2011 and 2012), the 2011 Pakistan Humanitarian and Early Recovery Review, International Crisis Group reports on Pakistan (ICG 2012). The OCHA Situation Reports, Humanitarian Bulletins and Humanitarian Dashboard reports (OCHA April, August and November 2012), the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum website and the "Gender-Sensitive Response and Recovery" report by OXFAM (Oxfam 2012), which all provided valuable background information for the evaluation.

Background information on NRC's operations in Pakistan was drawn from various NRC documents, e.g. the NRC Pakistan Fact Sheet and NRC between 2009 and 2014. Multi-year and annual strategy proposals and annual progress reports covering the years under review gave additional information about activities planned and implemented. The NRC website www.nrc.no, gives an overview on NRC's mission, standards and policies.

The team also reviewed relevant evaluations on Pakistan, including Dara's Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response to Pakistan's 2010 Flood Crisis of March 2011, and NRC's Evaluation on Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance in Pakistan and Afghanistan, 2009.

These documents set the context and provided a basis on which the evaluators could see what NRC and other humanitarian actors had achieved (or failed to achieve) in the past with which to compare activities over the period covered.

A large number of project documents were made available by NRC Oslo and Country Office Pakistan. A sample of these include: Pakistan Country Strategies of 2010, 2011-2013 and 2012-2014, assessment reports, logframes, quarterly reports from 2010 to 2012, project proposals for 2010, 2011 and 2012 for other donors as well as Norad, and NRC Activities by

²⁰ Please note that we refer to the majority of NRC documents by internal names

Location and Date (different funding sources). Annex 2 provides a description of a selection of these documents. A full list of documents that the evaluation team has had access to is available in Annex 3.

The internal documents reviewed are mainly project specific and provided the team with insights into how NRC staff use guidelines, policies, activities, assessments and reports for project activities. We did not, despite requests, get access to specific baseline documents beneficiary verification surveys or monitoring surveys or reports. It would have been useful to review such documents as they could have enabled an assessment of project outcomes.

2 Research Strategy and Methodology

In this section we briefly describe the research strategy and methods used, and comment on reliability and validity of the results. Our task has been to examine NRC's activities at field, country and regional level. The terms of reference focus on relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, and cross-cutting issues. We have aimed at collecting data in a way that fulfils the DAC criteria, despite the difficulties in making first-hand observations and interviewing beneficiaries.

In line with DAC criteria, interpreted through the ALNAP Guide for evaluating humanitarian action (Beck 2006), the team's overall evaluation strategy was to conduct a systematic and impartial examination of NRC's humanitarian action intended to draw lessons to improve policy and practice and enhance accountability.

As suggested in the ALNAP Guide, the DAC criteria were used as complementary to each other. This meant that, for example, in evaluating effectiveness the team not only sought to determine if objectives had been met but whether they were appropriate to the context and beneficiary caseload in question, whether they were met efficiently, were sustainable and complementary to other interventions – both NRC's and other actors' activities. In order to promote lesson learning, the team examined what activities took place and why they were designed and implemented in that way.

The evaluation looked at *relevance* to determine the extent to which NRC's interventions were priority activities according to the needs of beneficiaries and in line with NRC's core competencies. For *appropriateness*, the team looked mainly at context, seeking to determine if the kind of activity implemented was right for particular events or phases of the humanitarian emergency, opportunities and constraints present at the time, if project interventions were designed with the participation of beneficiaries and were culturally and conflict sensitive.

Within the scope of the relevance and appropriateness aspect of the evaluation the team looked also at connectedness and coverage. These are issues that complement the Relevance question and the team considered it necessary, given the context of NRC programming, to examine them. The analysis of *connectedness* was mainly concerned with NRC's internal connectedness to its own programmes and with the activities of other partners (also a coordination aspect). For *coverage*, the team examined the extent to which NRC had addressed the needs of major population groups in life-threatening situations and the efforts it had made to identify, reach out and assist them. This entailed an assessment of *conflict-sensitivity*: the extent to which NRC sought to reach the maximum number of people in need within a conflict environment that could have placed them, their implementing partners and beneficiaries at risk.

The team examined *effectiveness*, i.e. the extent to which NRC projects had achieved their objectives, through a variety of techniques. The team focused questions of *efficiency* mainly on the tools that NRC used to ensure that inputs were used and/or procured and the system of checks and balances.

In addition the team triangulated information from NRC's documents and statements concerning sustainability and exit strategies in interviews with various stakeholders. Cross-cutting issues were included to assess how they contributed to meeting the DAC criteria: Gender, Age, Diversity and Corruption were specified in the Terms of Reference, and Disaster Risk Reduction, Linking Relief with Rehabilitation and Development and Capacity-building were added by the team as relevant issues.

2.1 Focus on Systems and Processes

We have described and assessed what NRC has accomplished. Evaluation field access has been severely limited. For example, the evaluators were unable to visit ICLA sites to interview beneficiaries or programme staff working there which has severely compromised our ability to evaluate this important sector of NRC's work. In order to partially compensate for this we have examined NRC systems and processes, assessing whether NRC has the organisational capacity to accomplish their objectives and whether they can show that such capacity is being used.

To explore relevance we have assessed if a certain activity is or was relevant to the intended beneficiaries by interviewing different stakeholders and by comparing the selected outputs with stakeholder interviews, including beneficiaries. We have also looked at the systems in place for assessing relevance, such as needs analyses, interaction with stakeholders. Finally, we have looked at documented evidence of the use of such methods and asked in interviews with various stakeholders if they have been used.

The question of whether a certain activity has achieved the intended results (effectiveness) has been approached at three different levels: we started by looking at plans and reports, making observations and interviewing different stakeholders to find out if the results have in fact been achieved. Secondly, we examined if NRC has the necessary "tools" for implementing and measuring the intended results, such as a system for reporting and follow-up, necessary staffing and skills etc. Thirdly, we compared reports, internal evaluations, interviews with staff, other organisations, implementing partners and beneficiaries to find out if they have knowledge of these tools and if they are actually being used.

For efficiency, a similar approach was adopted, assessing if activities have been implemented and results achieved in an efficient way (i.e. relating the achieved results to the resources spent). The evaluation context has limited the extent of this analysis – partly because the evaluation team has not been able to e.g. visit market places to cross-check local prices for goods supplied, but also because context has limited implementation alternatives available to NRC, reducing management choice to: do it this way or not at all. We have paid attention to the systems that enable an organisation to make choices that encourage efficiency, such as methods for monitoring and evaluation, the way financial and activities data are used in project management, etc. We have also analysed whether reports are used and acted upon, by looking at the reports, budgets and budget revisions, monitoring efforts actually implemented etc. and by interviewing relevant staff and stakeholders.

Other evaluation topics, i.e. cross-cutting issues, conflict sensitivity, sustainability etc., have been approached in a similar way.

2.2 Impartiality vs. participation

Our initial intent was to add to the learning component by using elements of participatory evaluation, specifically by involving NRC staff (from non-evaluated projects) as research assistants. There is always a balance between learning and impartiality, and at the request of

Norad, this strategy was changed. Research Assistants employed temporarily for the PETS²¹, the national consultant, Mr. Abid Rehman, and a female translator, Ms. Nousheen Khan were all independent from NRC. Due to the non-granting of visas for two of the original team members, Charles Byamugisha and Anne Davies, more work than originally planned had to be taken on by Mr. Rehman, Ms. Khan and the PETS research assistants, all of whom conducted the field interviews with beneficiaries. Interview questions were provided by Ms. Davies to assist the interview process and ensure that similar questions were asked to all respondents. Due to time and security constraints, only a sample of these were used by the interviewers, who furthermore could not investigate certain issues arising from beneficiary statements in more depth. The PETS assistants were able to travel to FATA, a valuable input to the evaluation since they were able to interview NRC beneficiaries there. This would have been impossible for international consultants.

Although this has not been a participatory evaluation, NRC has been heavily involved in the planning, preparation and implementation stages. As part of the learning component, we have sought to involve them in the analysis of data collected by having data sharing and an analysis session prior to departure from the country.

2.3 Attribution of results

Attribution of results becomes more difficult the further along the chain from output to outcome to impact you move. The nature of NRC's planning, reporting and follow-up systems is such that there is little documented information that enables a comparison of "before" and "after" the intervention. Documented baseline studies were not available and reports show that planned efforts to assess results implemented are often delayed or made simpler. Planned and reported results are output focussed.

In several areas, attribution of output is simple as NRC is the only organisation supplying a certain good or service - or supply goods that are easily identifiable. To address attribution of output in other cases, as well as outcome, the team has used a simplified version of the most significant change method. We asked interviewees what important changes have occurred in their lives. Based on responses we refocused the question on a certain theme, e.g. shelter, and then used backwards tracing to ask for the reasons for this change in order to find out if the interviewee attributes the change to an activity undertaken by NRC. We have also asked for the effects of NRC activities. This gives information about both unintended effects and if the interviewee perceives that intended effects have been achieved.

The ideal target group for this kind of questioning is beneficiaries, and whenever possible such questions have been asked in interviews with beneficiaries. We were fortunate that the local consultants and research assistants were able to conduct a number of interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries in project intervention areas and feel confident that a representative number has been interviewed. However, as the team had limited ability to speak at length to them and could not probe more deeply into issues that needed further explanation, we have mostly asked such questions in interviews with staff and other stakeholders.

A third way to approach attribution is to study the counterfactual, i.e. to ask what would have happened if the activity had not been implemented, or to compare the situation with a similar setting where the activity has not been implemented. The first way of approaching the counterfactual has the same limitations as the method described above, and in our view gives a more biased answer in that the activity is introduced to the respondent at the outset. The second approach is even less feasible given the security and logistical constraints, as it requires visits to more locations.

²¹ Public Expenditure Tracking Survey.

2.4 Data Collection

The following sources and methods were used to extract and triangulate²² information:

Method	Source	Nature of Source	Reason for selection
Document review	Documents from internet research	General policy papers, humanitarian evaluations, humanitarian issues	To verify the general and sectorial conditions in Pakistan according to reports and issues papers (funding appeals, previous interventions and methodologies). To learn from humanitarian evaluations concerning Pakistan or specific issues (e.g. Gender, ICLA) providing insights for questions needing to be asked.
	Documents from NRC Oslo	Policy Papers, Financial Handbook, Guidance notes, country programmes	To assess the tools that guide field staff in their activities and triangulate the degree of their usefulness in the field
	Documents from NRC Country Office	Project documents	Detailed review of project proposals, reports, logframes etc. to assess and triangulate in stakeholder interviews
Interviews	NRC staff at HO	Individual staff interviews	To learn how NRC works: programming, project design, procurement, monitoring and evaluation, admin, human resources, interaction with staff in country offices; to triangulate
	NRC staff in the Pakistan Country Office	Individual staff interviews: project managers, admin, finance/ procurement, human resources, monitoring and evaluation	To learn how NRC works at field office level as above, plus relations/interaction with Regional Office Nairobi and capacity-building; triangulate HO/regional perspectives
	External partners	Senior representatives of UN agencies and local authorities	To assess NRC's coordination, contribution to Clusters, information-sharing, pro-activity (e.g. WASH, returns, durable solutions), cooperation, and to triangulate
	Beneficiaries	Committee members and individual beneficiaries	To triangulate; assess results, levels of satisfaction, capacity-building
Group Interviews/ Focus group discussions	Implementing Partners	Representatives of Implementing Partners	What they did, how they did it, interaction with NRC and capacity-building
	Community leaders	Beneficiary representatives	To triangulate, assess satisfaction results, feedback, training
	Beneficiaries	Beneficiaries in different projects	To triangulate, assess results, satisfaction, capacity-building
Observations	Visits to project sites	To verify physical components of outputs.	To triangulate information collected from other sources – but time was too short to do this comprehensively
Data sharing and joint analysis	NRC staff	NRC staff at different locations and levels	To triangulate data collected at respective site and discuss findings

²² We understand the term 'triangulation' according to the OECD/DAC definition: 'the use of three or more theories, sources of information or types of analysis to verify and substantiate an assessment'.

sessions			
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Figure 1: Data collection methods.

We obtained information regarding NRC's performance on its core competencies from a variety of sources, triangulating as we went along. For example, a question concerning 'effectiveness' (e.g. Outcomes) in a Distribution core competence would be picked up from a project report, then we would question the relevant NRC staff member about it (sometimes more than one staff, e.g. Project manager and Monitoring and Evaluation staff) and triangulate it with community leaders, beneficiaries, peer groups and local partners as possible. The evaluation placed substantial emphasis on interviews with beneficiaries to assess their views against NRC reports, although this method was often difficult to implement given security constraints.

Before the field work began, the team developed a list of people or functions that we wished to interview, and asked for NRC's help in identifying these and setting up interviews. During field work, additional stakeholders were identified and interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted based on interview guidelines or checklists. These were extracted from the Evaluation Questions Matrix developed during the inception phase of the evaluation along with stakeholder adapted sets of methods and questions. Pre-field work team meetings allowed contextualisation. Responses and evidence were compiled and shared in the team, mainly through the matrix mentioned.

A list of interviewees can be found in Annex 1, and a list of documents in Annex 2.

2.5 Selection of projects for study

After reviewing a broad range of project documents for the implemented projects in 2012-12 (proposals, periodic reports, logframes) a sample of 9 projects was selected. The selection criteria were as follows:

- ⌚ Projects that were possible to visit, given the security and logistical limitations.
- ⌚ Projects that appeared highest in priority for NRC within each core competency, irrespective of donor²³
- ⌚ Projects that could have been implemented over the three-year period in review

The selected projects are listed in the table below. The project code is NRC's internal project reference numbering, where the first two letters refer to country (SO), the second two to the type of activity (food = FK, shelter = FS), the first two digits indicate year and the last two refer to the individual project number.

Project Code/ Location	Million NOK	Dates	Sector	Donor
PKFM1001, KP	19.98	15 Nov 2010 – 15 Aug 2011	Multi-sector	NMFA
PKFS1002, KP, FATA	3.3	1 Sep 2010 - 31 Aug 2011	Temporary Shelter	ECHO
PKFS1007, KP	12	17 August 2010 – 17 August 2011	NFIs, tents	NMFA
PKFS1101 KP and FATA		1 Jan – 31 Dec 2011	Shelter	SIDA
PKFM1102, KP	12	6 May 2011 – 5 May 2012	ICLA, NFI, Shelter	NMFA
PKFK1102, KP	3.2	6 May 2011 – 5 May 2012	NFI	NMFA

²³ WASH only became a core competency at the beginning of 2012.

PKFM1201, KP and FATA	6.7	1 Jan – 31 Dec 2012	NFIs, (Education)	Sida
PKFM1202, Pakistan	12	1 Jan – 31 Dec 2012	Shelter, NFIs (Education)	NMFA
PKFM1203		1 Jan – 31 Dec 2012	Shelter, NFIs, WASH, ICLA	UNHCR

Figure 2: List of projects for evaluation.

Of the above, the NFI-component of project PKFM1102 was selected for the Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS). The TOR identify Shelter and Emergency Food Security Distribution (EFSD) as priority for PETS and Shelter was the focus in Somalia and South Sudan. PKFM1102 is not EFSD and NRC had no EFSD programmes in Pakistan. This project was therefore selected as distribution of NFIs has significant similarities to food distribution, the project was accessible security-wise, it was important in terms of financial contribution and it was funded by NMFA.

2.6 Organisation of the field visit

The evaluation was conducted by Ternstrom Consulting AB in association with Channel Research Ltd. The field visits were conducted by a team of four consultants; Björn Ternström (Team Leader and Lead Consultant Pakistan), Japhet Makongo (PETS consultant), Abid Rehman (Local Consultant) and Nousheen Khan. The planning of the field work was done in dialogue with NRC, which provided logistics and security during field visits. This was unavoidable given the security situation, the limited availability of transportation, and a concern for possible negative effects on NRC's activities from the presence of the evaluation team. The evaluation team split up in order to be able to cover different project areas in Pakistan. The following locations were visited:

Where	When	Who
NRC Pakistan Country Office, Peshawar	Nov 15–22th	Björn Ternström, Japhet Makongo (left 21st)
Charsadda, KP	Nov 16th	Björn Ternström, Nousheen Khan and Abid Rehman
Ghari Momin, Nowshera, KP	Nov 17th	Björn Ternström, Nousheen Khan and Abid Rehman
Prang, Charsadda, KP	Nov 18th	Björn Ternström, Nousheen Khan and Abid Rehman
Jalozai camp, KP	Nov 18th	Japhet Makongo with enumerators
NRC Pakistan Country Office, Peshawar	Nov 19th	Field work cancelled for security reasons
Jalozai camp, KP	Nov 20th	Enumerators
Bajaur, FATA	Nov 18th–20th	Enumerators
Expatriots evacuated	Nov 22nd	NRC evacuated all expats to Islamabad due to security concerns

Figure 3: Field visit details.

2.7 Limitations

2.7.1 Security

The highly insecure situation in Pakistan affected the selection of areas and projects that were visited, the extent of direct observation that could be made, the way interviews were conducted and the amount of information that could be collected from the target population.

During the inception phase of the evaluation, a security meeting was arranged with NRC, Norad and the evaluation team leader to discuss logistics and planning of the field work. It was agreed that the team should spend as little time as possible in the field; that NRC should recommend and have the final say in the areas and projects to visit; that detailed field visit plans should be shared with as few individuals and organisations as possible; and that NRC should arrange local transport, security and help in preparations for interviews.

The organisation being evaluated has thus been involved in designing the field work to a larger extent than would be the case in an evaluation in an area where an evaluation team can move and interact with people freely.

The security situation allowed very little time to conduct the evaluation and only a sample of key informants could be interviewed. The team communicated to NRC in advance of the evaluation who they would like to see and NRC arranged the interview schedule accordingly. At no time did NRC try to influence the interview selection process but, given the shortage of time, it was not possible to interview all those requested in the team's list and some were not available, so NRC made the prioritisation. In each area we sought to reach beneficiaries and their representatives, local authorities or their equivalent, the international agencies (UN) which had most inter-action with NRC or who were working in the same contexts.

Two rockets detonated close to the NRC office during the visit, raising security concerns and further restricting field visits. An important national religious holiday that typically results in violence cut short the evaluation by one day. International consultants were unable to travel outside the office except for a maximum of 1 hour interviews with community leaders in Jalozaï camp, Charsadda and Nowshera. Anticipating this possibility and allowing for last-minute changes to the schedule according to daily security updates, the team retained the services of the PETS enumerators to perform beneficiary interviews for the evaluation in addition to their main task. The enumerators travelled to Bajaur agency in FATA and were able to interview individual male beneficiaries of NRC's shelter programme and conduct focus group discussions. Interviews with local and federal authorities, UN partners were held at the NRC or partner office compounds in Peshawar. A planned interview with one of the two NORCAP secondees in the country had to be cancelled due to security restrictions on expatriate movement.

Security constraints meant that the team could not simply 'walk out the door and go to an interview'. It took time to organise security related to the visits meaning that fewer interviews could take place than hoped for. This is not unusual in conflict-affected contexts. The highly conflictual nature of the Pakistan context can make identifying individuals potentially life-threatening and the team was cautious about sharing advance plans of visits and locations.

In a non-conflict context, or a less dangerous one, evaluators would normally mingle in society, conduct spot-check interviews in a market or other public place to assess the level and degree of recovery and the conditions of people in general. This would provide a point of comparison to those whom the client is assisting – in this case, IDPs who have lost nearly everything in their flight. The situation in Pakistan did not allow us to do this and NRC security would certainly not have permitted it. Thus we do not have such a point of comparison.

2.7.2 Scope and content

The Terms of Reference for the evaluation were to assess NRC's core competencies of Camp Management, Emergency Food Security and Distribution, Shelter, ICLA and WASH. In Pakistan there have been no food distributions or Camp Management activities in 2010-12.

The Terms of Reference instruct the team to interview NORCAP personnel on assignments in case countries wherever relevant. During this field visit, no interviews with NORCAP secondees were possible. NORCAP data will be presented in the main evaluation report.

The evaluation also includes a public expenditure tracking survey (PETS) of one project in Pakistan. The findings of the PETS will be presented in a joint report for the three case countries. The joint report will include a description of PETS specific methodology.

2.7.3 Reliability and Validity

The way this field visit was implemented affects reliability and validity of the results of the evaluation. Neither country nor projects or areas were selected randomly, hence results cannot be generalised to other activities, areas or countries. Similarly, the involvement of NRC in the selection of projects and location is a potential cause for bias in the selection of projects, and hence evaluation results. In the dialogue concerning selection of project areas to visit we have asked for motivations regarding proposals. We have found them to be balanced between evaluation team criteria²⁴ and logistical/security realities. The selection of beneficiaries to interview has not been directly affected by NRC.

3 Findings²⁵ on Core Competencies

In this section we present findings on core competencies. The next chapter presents findings on an overall level.

In project documents NRC has stated that sources of verification include distribution lists, project records and statistics, field visits and reports, beneficiary satisfaction surveys, project reports and feedback from other stakeholders. Despite the evaluation team asking NRC many times in writing to provide these documents, none - apart from project reports - have been produced. Project reports, while useful, are drafted by NRC and cannot be considered as 'objectively verifiable' sources of information.

3.1 Shelter

Shelter Finding 1: NRC's Shelter programmes have provided needed protection

NRC's Shelter response has been relevant, effective and efficient, providing the most vulnerable internally displaced families with temporary, transitional and permanent shelter at different stages of response to conflict and disaster events. Permanent shelter includes cement block units that are designed according to Shelter Cluster specifications and which comprise a room, a kitchen and a washroom for a family of seven. Beneficiaries are selected according to Cluster-agreed vulnerability criteria and are located in remote areas with a lack of infrastructure where a UN-Habitat gap analysis identified the most unmet needs:

²⁴ Criteria varied between evaluation tasks e.g. PETS required relative stability to at all be possible, a project site with more than one core competency represented was given priority, a mix of activities completed in past six months and ongoing was sought.

²⁵ The evaluation interprets the term 'Finding' according to the DAC glossary: "A finding uses evidence from one or more evaluations to allow for a factual statement." In certain cases we have added our own assessments to the factual and triangulated findings, following the TOR request for 'assessment' as well as 'description'.

Nowshera, Charsadda, D I Khan, Bajaur and Mohmand, and where – in the case of FATA - few other NGOs²⁶ are operating.

A majority (80%) of beneficiaries interviewed in return areas in Bajaur indicated that Shelter was their most pressing need:

“Without NRC’s assistance we would have had to live in the open air or migrate to another area where we could find assistance”.

Source: Beneficiary interviewed in Bajaur.

All of them confirmed to feeling safe and protected in their new homes. Only one person said he feared a return of the Taliban to the area. According to beneficiaries there have been no negative effects from the Shelter intervention but if any were to arise, they would be confident of raising them with NRC.

Tents are considered in the Pakistan context to come under NFIs and will be dealt with in more detail below.

Shelter Finding 2: Temporary solutions were found for beneficiaries while their houses were being rebuilt

In order to assist beneficiaries with shelter protection during the time it took to reconstruct their permanent houses and to encourage them to return to their place of origin, NRC provided them with tents. A total of 900 tents were provided against a target of 1,300. NRC decided not to buy more tents as UNHCR had a large supply and was covering this gap. The additional tents provide needed shelter to those who have not yet been included in the programme.

Shelter Finding 3: Beneficiaries have different perceptions of shelter according to the context

The one-room permanent shelters provided to returnees in Bajaur were stated by beneficiaries to fit their most pressing needs. However, a significant percentage of those interviewed said they were reluctant to move in before constructing a boundary wall – not included in the housing package. Boundary walls are a cultural pre-requisite for housing in north-western areas of Pakistan, to the extent that some beneficiaries have not yet moved their families into the new house because they are still working on building the boundary walls. The need for a boundary wall is related to the taboo against women being seen in public – without the wall, women become ‘prisoners’ unable to get fresh air or sunlight and unable to conduct their daily chores²⁷. To meet this cultural need NRC could have considered different intervention modalities: providing materials or cash vouchers for the house owner to use according to his or her preference (also in line with Emergency Shelter and NFI Cluster guidelines). The contractor-driven modality is perhaps easiest and least complex for agencies but in most cases it is more appropriate to undertake a community or owner-driven approach²⁸. The exception is those families who have no means of constructing their houses

²⁶ Non-Governmental Organization.

²⁷ Beneficiary and staff interviews.

²⁸ There have been many debates on this issue with a majority of opinions preferring an owner or community-driven approach. See UN-Habitat, UNDP, IFRC: *Sri Lanka Tsunami 2004 Lessons Learned – a donor and owner driven reconstruction approach*, Belgian Red Cross Flanders, March 2012; *External evaluation report on the Cash for Repair and Reconstruction Project Sri Lanka* commissioned by the Consortium of Swiss Organizations (Swiss Solidarity, Swiss Red Cross, HEKS and SDC), March 2007: “This evaluation provides empirical evidence that, where people are traditionally involved in organizing the building of their own dwellings, they construct houses that are more likely to respond to their needs and preferences than houses provided by outside agencies”; *Post-disaster Housing Reconstruction: Comparative Study of Donor Driven vs. Owner Driven Approach*, Ratnayake, 2009. While the study found that the quickest and the most effective way to rebuild houses after a disaster is to employ what is known as the ‘Donor Driven’ approach, it concluded that the Owner Driven approach has a number of advantages over the Donor Driven approach.

without a contractor. NRC has learned from this experience and is considering different housing options for the future.

Some issues in NRC Shelter projects were raised by beneficiaries. These were related to quality of the construction, to people with disabilities were not being considered and also that the structure of the shelters was not according to the needs. For instance, in Nowshera and in Charsadda community members pointed out that the structure of the wash room and kitchen is not practical: the kitchens were constructed without chimneys and wash rooms had no sanitation system available such as safe water provision, connection to main sewerage system or, in the absence of such systems, septic tanks for drainage. In addition, the wash rooms constructed had no facility for disabled and aged individuals.

Shelter Finding 4: Shelter has provided ‘most significant change’ in beneficiaries’ lives

Beneficiaries were asked what had contributed to the most significant change in their lives. All of them stated that they had experienced a positive change in their living standards when they received a permanent house from NRC.

“Our life style has totally changed. We are living in concrete houses now compared to mud houses before they were destroyed”

Flood-affected beneficiary interview, Nowshera

Shelter Finding 5: Stakeholder consultations guide vulnerability targeting

NRC teamed up with community representatives to conduct door-to-door assessments for the selection of the beneficiaries before starting on the physical construction of permanent shelters. A ‘beneficiary selection format’ was jointly designed to select the most vulnerable families. The format was finalised after consultation with political administration, FDMA and other relevant stakeholders. Houses in the target communities were visited and families were assessed and selected for the construction of shelters. The evaluation interviews with non-beneficiaries in these communities indicated that they considered the targeting and selection process to be fair and transparent. The extract from the assessment report below shows that NRC selected families from the most vulnerable groups.

Female Headed	Family with Low Income	Large Family Size (8 members or more)	Disabled Headed	Elderly Headed	Conflict affected families	Total
13	200	63	2	21	200	200

Figure 4: NMFA shelter beneficiaries in Bajaur Agency, FATA²⁹

Shelter Finding 6: Beneficiaries are included in NRC surveys and monitoring

All beneficiaries stated that NRC had consulted with them as to what they needed most as well as the design and placement of their houses. NRC visited the sites periodically to ensure beneficiaries’ well-being and learn of any grievances. Those interviewed were satisfied that they or their community leaders or political agents were involved in needs assessments. Community leaders confirmed in interviews that they were involved in all phases of assessment, planning and monitoring of shelter interventions. Such participation ensures maximum relevance, allowing NRC to consider beneficiary preferences and modify its approach if necessary.

Shelter Finding 7: Activities started later than planned but were finished on time

²⁹ PKFM1102 Final Report to NMFA

Largely due to NRC's meticulous planning³⁰ and the joint community selection process, activities started later than planned. Through regular coordination meetings and close monitoring, supervision and quality checks of the contractor, activities were completed on time and the finished shelters handed over to beneficiaries.

Similarly, UNHCR commented that procurement processes led to late start up but on-time completion of projects. NRC had adapted to limited contractor capacity by parcelling work into smaller contracts resulting in six contractors, as compared to another implementing partner's approach with only two contractors.

Shelter Finding 8: Emergency shelter stockpiles are necessary in disaster-prone areas

Lessons learned from previous experience in Pakistan have cautioned NRC to stockpile emergency shelter items: the speed with which a crisis and resulting displacement can occur typically result in scarce and expensive goods in local markets.

UNHCR cited with appreciation that NRC had been flexible and adaptable in several cases, including having provided in kind materials at a time when both the market and other stakeholders were out of stock.

Shelter Finding 9: Stated outcomes are difficult to measure as formulated in project documents

NRC's stated outcome is "to improve living conditions and coping mechanisms of the conflict-affected returnee families through the provision of 200 semi-permanent shelters".³¹ This would pre-suppose that baseline documents or assessments provided details of living conditions and coping mechanisms of IDPs *before* its intervention, and would need certain measurements to show how the intervention had improved them. However, no such baseline documents were provided by NRC to the evaluation team and no measurements of outcomes are listed in the logframe. A more measurable outcome might read: "IDPs' protection needs will be addressed and a durable solution found to their displacement through the provision of 200 semi-permanent shelters". This could be more measurable and evidence-based, both by providing a description of their protection predicament before the outcome (i.e. displacement) and by stating how this had been improved by providing them with a durable solution to their displacement as a result of the intervention.

3.2 Distribution of Non-Food Items (NFIs)

NRC provides standard NFI kits to two different groups of people: IDPs and returnees. IDPs comprise newly-displaced families arriving in camps or host communities as well as 'stayees' (those displaced within their home areas), and to beneficiaries of permanent shelter upon handover of the house. Tents were distributed among Bajaur returnees at the time of their return to the area of origin (see Finding S2 above). NRC also distributed summerised and winterised NFIs and mobile phones during the course of the project, distributed when the affected families reached Jalozi camp after they were displaced from their area of origin. The details of items that were distributed during the 2011 project are given below:

Item	Type	Quantity distributed
Mobile sets	Mobile sets	2 000
Tents	Tents	900

³⁰ Includes site identification, beneficiary identification, followed by contract advertisement and award. According to the Country Director, if these steps are not followed, a contractor may come later on and say he quoted a price for one location but the location awarded to him is more expensive etc.

³¹ Project documents: PKFM1102.

NFIs	Summerised NFIs	7 420
	Winterised NFIs	2 439
	Total NFIs (Summerised and Winterised)	9 859

Figure 5: NFI items

NFI Finding 1: NRC's emergency NFI distribution was relevant to the context and effectively responded to beneficiary needs

Tents provided to IDPs in camps were distributed according to arrivals and registration. These were considered by beneficiaries to have provided necessary protection from the elements at the families' most vulnerable stage of displacement. Beneficiaries indicated overwhelmingly that the tents had responded to their most pressing needs, protecting their families and assets. Without this assistance they would have been exposed to the elements and have fallen sick. They considered that all the tents provided were used for the intended purpose of sheltering families³². Based on interviews in several locations, the great majority of beneficiaries stated that the other non-food items also responded to their needs, even though they had been pre-determined by NRC and not based on beneficiaries' expressed needs. The mobile phone item of the kit was noted by beneficiaries to be particularly useful:

- ⌚ People can now communicate easily with their relatives in home areas.
- ⌚ Aid agencies working in the camp can contact them easily via phone to provide information.
- ⌚ Entertainment value (the elderly noted with appreciation that they can listen in to news and other current affairs programmes).
- ⌚ Male beneficiaries working outside the camp can stay in contact with their families without having to incur expensive transportation costs to visit them.

NFI Finding 2: NFIs were procured responsibly

NFIs including tents were procured through competitive tender. Specifications were created looking into the market availability and analysing the stock of the suppliers present in NRC suppliers' database. On receipt of quotations from various bidders, NRC selected the supplier whose offer most closely complied with the technical specification and with a competitive price. The contents of the kits were aligned with those of other agencies.³³

NFI Finding 3: Different opinions about NRC's distribution system were found in group discussions and individual interviews

In Focus group discussions (FGD), beneficiaries and other community members stated they were satisfied by the way NFIs were distributed and the distribution criteria used. They said that no discrimination was noted in distribution. According to camp committee members, several organisations were working in IDP camps, all with their own procedures and different kinds of work. They found that NRC performed its work more systematically and fairly in comparison to others, providing relief to a maximum number of people.

In contrast, when interviewed individually, a small percentage of beneficiaries thought that NRC did not target the items on an equal basis among the beneficiaries. There were some families who got two tents along with NFI kit but some of the families were omitted – especially less visible new arrivals that stayed outside the camp. Some thought that the most deserving families were not given the tents and NFIs.

³² However, UNHCR noted that their post distribution follow-up in Jalozai had uncovered instances of tents unused for lack of beneficiaries. UNHCR correctly noted that this was attributable to gaps in pre-NRC involvement needs assessment – NRC had fulfilled their assigned contract with UNHCR to build tents.

³³ PKFM1102 report to NMFA, confirmed in key informant interviews.

“NRC did not give materials to those people whose names were included in beneficiaries list even after staff members had met them and assured them to benefit from the project”.

Individual interview statement, Bajaur, 19 Nov 2012

A high percentage of men interviewed thought that the targeting of mobile phones missed vulnerable individuals such as widows, disabled, the elderly and orphans, while most women thought that targeting had reached the most deserving.

Several beneficiaries interviewed appreciated the kits but said they needed replacing after two years of use, and some, who had received summer kits, said that winterised kits were needed. Asked if distribution should be done through IDP committees (shuras) a significant number thought that the committee would be more inclined to favouritism than the existing method of NRC-supervised distribution.

A high number of individual interviews revealed a ‘don’t know’ response when asked if there had been any negative effects from the distributions, indicating perhaps unwillingness to voice dissatisfaction. Others who did express dissatisfaction said specifically that kits were sealed and no one knew about their contents, they did not consist of basic items and nepotism was evident in distributions. Within the short time-frame for interviews the evaluation did not manage to verify why beneficiaries did not know what were in the kits. NRC states that ‘the content of the kit is written on the NFI bags and on big sign boards; the bag is tied up’.

NFI Finding 4: NFIs were targeted to beneficiaries through consultations

NRC targeted conflict affected families in camps and selected villages, which were identified through mutual discussion with other stakeholders including: Commission for Afghan refugees (CAR), FATA Disaster Management Authority (FDMA), Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), and local NGOs, aiming to ensure a fair and transparent selection process.

NFI Finding 5: NRC included beneficiaries in needs assessments

Needs assessments were carried out with the participation of beneficiaries and selection of items was made according to what had been best value for money, and most appreciated by beneficiaries in the past³⁴. NRC informed beneficiaries regularly on what they would be receiving and when:

“Prior to the tents and NFI distribution all the IDPs were well informed by NRC team. First, NRC team visited the camp and issued the tokens amongst all IDPs and then the NFI materials and tents were distributed”.

FGD statement, Bajaur, Nov 2012.

NFI Finding 6: Not all beneficiaries were satisfied with the quantity and quality of items

In group discussions some beneficiaries said the quantity of items was not sufficient and some items were of bad quality, indicating that a local agency, Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP), had better quality NFIs than NRC’s.³⁵ Others (male) said they would have preferred other items such as fans and gas cylinders because items were useful to women only – indicating that NRC had taken into account women’s needs when deciding on kit components. Almost a quarter of those interviewed individually were unhappy in the camps due to non-availability of basic needs, which they attributed to lack of government

³⁴ The NFI kit consisted of: blankets, plastic mats, steel cooking set, water bottles, soap, bed sheets, jerry cans, shoes, cloth for women, kitchen set (spoons, knives etc).

³⁵ Triangulation revealed this to be true. However, the other organization had distributed kits valued at Rs 6.000 while NRC kits (in line with cluster standards) were valued at Rs 1.500.

assistance. Tents were noted by over a quarter of beneficiaries to have been damaged on arrival, resulting in lower protection coverage from heavy rains and storms.

Evaluation Assessment

That different beneficiaries under different agency programmes receive NFI kits with such a wide disparity in value is a failure of the agencies to follow Cluster guidelines. The Pakistan 2011-12 Emergency Shelter and NFI Cluster recommends in its chapter on Principles that 'recommended shelter and NFI assistance packages should be adhered to by the implementing agencies'. In the section related to housing it further suggests that more expensive inputs should be avoided in the interests of not creating inequities. The kit that NRC provides is almost four times smaller in value than that provided by SRSP, indicating that NRC beneficiaries would have received significantly lower value or lower quality items than others. This may be the fault of SRSP in providing kits valued higher than any other agency, and not a fault of NRC. Either way, it is not in line with humanitarian principles of impartiality and, following the above evaluation finding, should be raised by NRC at Cluster level with a view to finding common consensus on kit items and value.

NFI Finding 7: NRC feedback mechanisms were satisfactory but did not reach everyone

Those interviewed in Bajaur said they were in regular contact with NRC, with camp management and with members of the committee to provide feedback on items received and other potential problems:

"We have communicated the voice of IDPs to the management and NRC team. We also collected the views and complaints of the beneficiaries and forwarded their needs to upper management. Some beneficiaries have had direct interaction with NRC team".

Community members' statement during FGD, Bajaur, 19 Nov. 2012.

Asked if they thought NRC could have done things differently, people interviewed in FGDs said that they were able to interact with NRC either directly or through committee members to make suggestions of how things could be done differently. Apart from comments on the composition of the kits, they considered that things did not need to be done differently as their suggestions had been already taken into consideration.

"NRC identified and realised the basic needs of IDPs during their arrival to the camp. NRC first visited to the camp, did a survey and made an estimation of the basic needs of IDPs. At priority bases people forwarded their suggestions to NRC team about quick relief. Then NRC provided them tents and after that NFI kits were distributed among those IDPs. The kit contained the materials needed for their daily use. NRC accommodated their suggestions to a great extent by providing them their utmost needed items. They avoided nepotism during the distribution of NFI kits and tents. They also accommodated the needs of IDPs".

Beneficiaries and community members' statement during focus group discussion, Bajaur, 19 Nov. 2012.

However, in individual interviews, almost half the people interviewed said they had not made any special request or provided feedback because the assistance came as a surprise to them. Asked about any gaps in assistance, most beneficiaries responded that more shelter units were needed in return areas, encouraging NRC to continue with its Shelter activities and widen it to incorporate more water schemes and rehabilitation of sewerage systems. This needs assessment was confirmed in interviews with UN and Government stakeholders.

Evaluation Assessment

It is possible that people were more open about their views in individual than in group interviews and a different perspective is obtained. It is also possible that some of these interviewees arrived in the camps *after* NRC had made its assessment with earlier arrivals and missed having their views heard. Overall the majority of beneficiaries interviewed in group discussions and individual interviews were satisfied with NFIs and the way they were distributed, leading us to conclude that NRC had made efforts to respond responsibly, though perhaps not fully effectively, given the reported quality deficiency of some items and/or gaps in effective information dissemination.

3.3 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

NRC introduced WASH as a new Core Competency in 2012. It is still a small component compared to Shelter. NRC intends to increase its programming importance in coming years. Especially water was repeatedly identified as an outstanding need by beneficiaries.

WASH Finding 1: Wash activities are appreciated in return Shelters and villages

Beneficiaries interviewed in return areas noted their appreciation for wash facilities in their one-room shelters, advocating for NRC to engage in additional water schemes in their communities. NRC's community water activities, comprising tube wells, water pumps and maintenance training in areas of high return, were also appreciated by the communities. Group discussions in two communities covered in the evaluation revealed that NRC had consulted with them about their preferences and had kept close contact with the community-selected committee members throughout the works.

WASH Finding 2: NRC's WASH activities in Pakistan combine hygiene promotion with material inputs, covering all beneficiary groups

At the time it hands over a reconstructed housing unit with washroom and NFI inputs included, NRC conducts hygiene awareness training to beneficiary families. In IDP camps, beneficiaries interviewed considered NRC to be well-trained and to treat gender issues fairly in terms of hygiene. Separate sanitary and hygiene items are distributed to men, women, boys, girls and the disabled. Specific brochures (awareness sketches) were designed for women, who are mostly illiterate. The brochures contain information on how and when to wash hands and maintain hygienic practices.

WASH Finding 3: WASH experience from IDP camps have been useful to beneficiaries on return:

More than half the beneficiaries interviewed said they had been engaged in camp maintenance, WASH and distribution activities during their stay in the camps and had received training on how to maintain facilities. These activities had given them an appreciation of the relation between maintenance, hygiene and health and had been useful for improving the hygienic practices of their families in their new or reconstructed homes. Women had comprised a majority of WASH trainees and hygiene targeting during their stay in the camps and the disabled were included as well, according to several disabled IDPs interviewed.

WASH Finding 4: NRC's reports on WASH effectiveness lack evidence

The outputs for WASH projects include how many households have been reached with drinking water and the amount of land irrigated, but does not measure outcomes in terms of health or nutrition indicators. For example, it would be useful to know if diseases (e.g. incidences of diarrhoea, especially in children) have decreased with improved access to

water and hygiene training but there is no baseline data to determine what these were *before* intervention and no measurements during or after the project³⁶.

Data verification and better quality control of reports are areas that NRC needs to work on.

3.4 Information, Counselling and Legal Aid (ICLA)

ICLA Finding 1: ICLA targets are surpassed in nearly all cases

According to project reports, in 2011 NRC superseded its targets in the cases of Afghan property claims registered, prepared and referred to NRC ICLA in Afghanistan; administration cases registered and resolved and information dissemination and counselling carried out with individuals. 85% of legal cases were resolved in favour of clients. The evaluation was unable to triangulate these reports.

ICLA Finding 2: Stakeholders are satisfied with NRC's ICLA activities

Stakeholders interviewed attested to the effectiveness of ICLA activities and to NRC's professionalism in this area of expertise. Both Pakistan and Afghan authorities indicated good relations with NRC regarding repatriation issues and emphasised that ICLA staff are experienced and professional. NRC has been providing ICLA services to Afghan refugees since the 1980s, according to the Commission for Afghan Refugees (CAR). Project managers act as an 'expertise' bridge with the authorities, having the highest levels of technical expertise of any international NGO working in Pakistan, according to stakeholders.

ICLA Finding 3: ICLA is instrumental in assisting IDPs to obtain National Identity Cards

A number of beneficiaries said what they most appreciated was NRC assistance in obtaining Computerised National Identity Cards (CNICs) and the training sessions that made them aware of its importance. This is a key aspect of ICLA given that the Identity card is necessary for IDPs to obtain assistance, birth certificates, enrolling children in school and access to other civil rights. Such rights include significant material support e.g. Government compensation for displacement and food subsidies. Information sessions are provided in IDP workshops at regular intervals, entitled "Information Session on Key Rights and the Importance of Civil Documentation in Accessing Rights". At the end of each session the beneficiaries are asked to give an evaluation of the workshop (although no evidence of such feedback sessions has been received by the evaluation). Several beneficiaries interviewed particularly stated ICLA training as a useful input.

We were not aware of the importance of National ID Card). NRC gave us training sessions and now the mind-set of everyone is

³⁶ See Sphere standards: <http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/hygiene-promotion/>: "Hygiene promotion is a planned, systematic approach to enable people to take action to prevent and/or mitigate water, sanitation and hygiene-related diseases".

"A thorough baseline data survey is necessary which identifies different groups in the community, their views about water, sanitation, health and their perceptions of the proposed project". From: *Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Emergencies, Chapter 8 of the Handbook 'Public Health Guide for Emergencies, pp 382- 441*, The Johns Hopkins and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies http://www.jhsph.edu/sebin/u/j/Chapter_8_Water_Sanitation_and_Hygiene_in_Emergencies.pdf.

"Although the humanitarian community acknowledges the need for good quality data in programme design and monitoring, the challenges and demands of field settings have too often led to the argument that "we just don't have time" or "it is too difficult". Yet without the allocation of time and resources to the collection of baseline and monitoring data, project activities cannot be grounded in strong evidence from programme evaluation". From: *'Challenges in collecting baseline data in emergency settings'*, Schlecht and Casey, Forced Migration Review issue 29, p.68. <http://www.fmreview.org/FMRpdfs/FMR29/68-70.pdf>

changed. They are now getting assistance through these cards which was not possible for us in past.

Beneficiary interview, Nowshera, Nov. 2012.

ICLA Finding 4: NRC training on ICLA activities to staff and information sessions to IDPs and refugees are appreciated

Project documents indicate that training is provided to all NRC staff working on ICLA activities. ICLA was also involved in training refugee community representatives with the aim of increasing their knowledge in relation to accessing their rights and services, thereby assisting refugees to resolve their own problems and achieve durable solutions without direct assistance from NRC.

ICLA Finding 5: ICLA is unable to reach potential female claimants in FATA

A key challenge noted by NRC staff and UNHCR is access to female potential claimants in FATA areas where female staff cannot travel and where females are not allowed to talk to men. This is a contextual challenge for FATA at present whereas before 2005 NRC staff had greater access in general, including to women. Some areas of KP have also been off-limits to NRC but this was only during military operations and visits could resume later. The authorities in FATA are reluctant for NRC to engage in ICLA activities in the area, according to NRC staff, mainly from fear of having human rights abuses revealed.

ICLA Finding 6: NRC is a responsible actor which would rather turn down a proposal if it felt it could not achieve objectives

Project staff interviewed stated that NRC decided not to undertake ICLA activities in Punjab and Sindh provinces, requested by UNHCR, given that it had no knowledge of or presence in the area.³⁷ That NRC feels able to undertake activities only when it is confident of being able to deliver quality services attests to its high degree of professionalism.

ICLA Finding 7: Recruitment of female ICLA staff contributes to a higher coverage of vulnerable groups

NRC has ensured that gender mainstreaming is reflected in its ICLA staff component, recruiting an equal number of male and female employees for project activities. The ICLA Project Manager is a woman and a significant number of female staff is deployed in the field in KP. Female staff are a particular asset because they can access both male and female beneficiaries. All-female workshops are organised and female clients are represented in court. Where possible, NRC refers its clients, many of whom are female (no breakdown given in project documents), to other service providers. Beneficiaries said that many internally displaced widows and female-headed households have been able to gain access to their return and property rights through ICLA's diligent research in tracking down male relatives who could vouch for them.

ICLA Finding 8: Demand for ICLA services attests to its relevance

The number of requests for ICLA services from both Pakistan IDPs and Afghan refugees shows that ICLA effectiveness has spread by word of mouth in vulnerable communities. This has required from ICLA a filtering system that allows individual consultations by level of vulnerability, including IDPs and returnees without shelter and refugees who cannot afford the fee of legal services. Counselling and information also includes the needs of children with regard to educational documentation which is necessary to facilitate their studies in both areas of return and displacement. Children are reported to be prime beneficiaries of ICLA activities including court representation in guardianship cases.

³⁷ Similarly, NRC declined targeted calls for proposals for shelter programming in Baluchistan as the organization did not feel it could respond with sufficient quality at that time.

4 Overall findings

4.1 Relevance

Relevance Finding 1: NRC's programmes are highly relevant to a context of ongoing humanitarian crises

In sudden-onset emergencies where people have to flee their homes the main needs are for food, domestic items, shelter and WASH activities. While other partners have intervened with food assistance, NRC's core competencies are relevant for responding to the other urgent needs, as confirmed by beneficiaries. NRC has also assisted the Pakistan government with durable solutions for IDPs and refugees, demonstrated by its return shelter programme for IDPs and information and counselling on repatriation to Afghans. NRC's decision to maintain a rapid response preparedness stock of NFI items is a rational intervention logic, given the annual flood events and perennial conflict that affect Pakistan, displacing hundreds of thousands of people each year.

Relevance Finding 2: NRC conducts needs assessments and continual monitoring to ensure relevance

According to documents reviewed, confirmed through interviews, NRC conducts needs assessments to identify areas where the influx of IDPs has been highest. However, NRC has not provided the evaluation team with any examples of needs assessments performed.

NRC's close coordination with other stakeholders (UN, NGOs, local authorities and relevant governmental institution such as PaRSSA/PDMA³⁸, communities' representatives, direct beneficiaries) has allowed a continuous monitoring of the situation to ensure appropriate collection of data and analysis.

NRC refers to several assessments (not provided to the evaluation) that have been conducted in areas of ongoing intervention as well as in other areas where new influxes of displaced persons have occurred. NRC said it had conducted exhaustive FGDs in a number of Union Councils of Peshawar valley where the displacement of the Kurram and Orakzai families has been occurring since March 2010 – but again, no evidence of this was provided.

Moreover, even though some areas (i.e. Bajaur and Mohamand) have remained off-limits for international organizations, NRC has been able to monitor developments through regular coordinating bodies and meetings, through direct contacts with IDPs coming from those areas, and through relations established with local NGOs implementing projects in the Agencies.

NRC also attests to participating in joint assessments mission organised by UN agencies, to ensure coherence, avoid duplications and fill gaps.

Relevance Finding 3: NRC has assisted a wide representation of population groups in need

NRC has achieved beneficiary coverage that includes those most affected by conflict and disasters: internally displaced persons both in camps and 'off-camp', refugees, returnees, 'stayees' (people who are displaced from their homes but have not left their home areas) and host communities. Beneficiary targeting has been towards the most vulnerable groups: female headed households, single parent families, the elderly and disabled, as a priority focus in beneficiary identification. Identifying the most vulnerable people 'off camp', 'stayees' and in host communities takes time and careful community work that cannot be rushed. Geographical coverage includes areas where high numbers of people are assessed to be in need of protection and assistance but where access is challenging.

³⁸ Provincial Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Settlement Authority.

Relevance Finding 4: Partnerships with other agencies have achieved positive synergies in achieving wide coverage

NRC has been selected (among 40 organizations) as one of three preferred implementing partners of UNHCR. Joint action to address some of the hardest challenges and identify solutions to them has leveraged international donations to a broad level of coverage and effectiveness.

Relevance Finding 5: Cooperation with national authorities helps NRC to obtain access to disaster and conflict-affected communities

Of particular relevance is NRC's approach of working in close cooperation with Pakistan local authorities to secure access to communities that few other NGOs are able to reach, while keeping direct control over the implementation of the project.

This approach, key components of which are the Peshawar base and the significant national representation among senior level staff, has repeatedly been cited as key to the high degree of access that NRC enjoys. Other factors identified include well connected staff, the fact that NRC has nationally recruited leadership and the organization's consistent attention to keeping government authorities well-informed on all aspects of operations.

Relevance Finding 6: Projects are slow to start but are completed in a timely manner

In terms of timeliness, NRC is often slow to start implementing projects, taking time to prepare, plan and put in place procurement procedures and implementation modalities. This is a responsible approach that ensures smooth implementation once started. Even though urgently-needed aid delivery may be delayed, NRC has a track record of completing projects on time. The evaluation considers that work plans could be made more realistic by factoring in the time it needs for planning.

Relevance Finding 7: NRC uses participatory approaches

This includes dialogue with local implementing partners, the cluster system and beneficiaries to ensure programmes are appropriate to priority needs. Beneficiaries attested to their participation in project design through their committee members. Programming is re-assessed for relevance through regular discussions with beneficiaries, annual planning and bi-annual review sessions, discussions in Cluster meetings and informal discussions between partners, ensuring adjustments to beneficiary priorities at regular intervals.

Participatory approaches to planning and follow-up are however not matched by participatory approaches to implementation which is primarily contractor or staff based. There is an ongoing debate within the organisation as to the pros and cons of this strategy.

Relevance Finding 8: NRC project documents do not include outcome measurements

Although stakeholder interviews bear evidence to the relevance and effectiveness of NRC's inputs and approaches, NRC project documents lack descriptions of how they intend to measure outcomes. The inclusion of such measurements in logframes, along with commensurate reporting, would focus NRC staff on identifying evidence of outcomes in relation to inputs. Logframes follow a set template, providing detailed information on the intervention logic, objectively verifiable indicators, sources of verification, assumptions, activities and preconditions - but no measurement indicators for outcomes either before or during a project. This is a common finding in all the logframes reviewed. From information provided in them currently, outcomes are difficult to measure, meaning that it is also difficult to point to specific and verifiable project achievements.

Relevance Finding 9: NRC documents do not reflect Theory of Change understanding

From a study of project documents and interviews with staff, it appears that NRC staff are not yet familiar with the concept of theories of change. While they design projects in a logical and rational way, there is no evidence of assumptions or of how goals may be reached, or the drivers of change. From discussions with staff, it is clear that the concepts are easy enough to pick up and their practical usefulness for programming generates significant professional interest among managers. The Country Office is aware of this and is discussing what and how to include programming tools in future training.

Relevance Finding 10: Conflict-sensitive programming improves relevance and effectiveness of NRC's projects

NRC staff are institutionally aware of the need for conflict-sensitive programming, which is particularly relevant to the Pakistan context. Examples are NRC's collaborative approach and close communications with the Pakistan authorities in order to obtain or maintain access to beneficiaries – attested to and appreciated by these authorities in interviews, geographical adjustments made in a flexible manner – much appreciated by UNHCR, and other programmatic readjustment mechanisms such as stockpiling of NFIs and tents to respond to new emergencies. Asked how such flexibility was possible in light of commitments to donors, NRC noted that among donors both NMFA and Sida were seen as enabling such adaptability.

4.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness Finding 1: Operational interventions have been effective in providing beneficiaries with the means to survive with dignity, achieving the results sought in the projects

Overall, NRC's programmes have effectively responded to beneficiaries' most pressing needs, according to beneficiary interviews. Shelter modalities have provided protection from the elements according to short or long-term needs. While needs are undoubtedly high and additional activities are called for by beneficiaries, beneficiaries attest to project activities making a positive change to their living conditions, both during displacement and on return. NRC has remained true to its core competencies and not been led by beneficiary wishes to branch out into other activities. This has ensured that its resources have been maximised for the purposes intended. Requests for further ICLA assistance, more shelters and beneficiaries advocating for more water schemes in return villages yet to receive such assistance is an indicator that activities implemented to date have been effective and appreciated.

Effectiveness Finding 2: NRC has not produced hard evidence that its projects achieve the results intended

NRC could provide better data to demonstrate the effectiveness of its projects and results achieved. Objectives given in project documents are difficult to measure and need to be articulated in such a way that results can be proven. This implies collection of baseline data – which NRC has not been able to produce at all for any of the projects in this evaluation. In February 2012, the Programme Development Unit was established in Peshawar. This unit combines responsibility for centralised information management and grants management with a Monitoring and Evaluation function separate from line management. Although late, this is a very positive investment which needs continued management support and organisational investment. The Monitoring and Evaluation function needs to introduce baseline studies and link these to monitoring reports through tools such as post-distribution monitoring surveys, Knowledge, Attitude and Practice surveys (KAPs), beneficiary feedback mechanisms and random spot-checks. Only when such tools have been developed and put to systematic use will the organisation be able to provide evidence of project effectiveness and effectively build

on lessons learned. Current focus on output leads to an over-emphasis on volume and under-emphasis on quality.

Effectiveness Finding 3: Programming and follow-up is Output focused:

NRC project proposals give a clear indication of the activities they intend to perform and who the intended beneficiaries are. However, as discerned in the previous case-country studies, logframes are not well-adapted to measuring outcome indicators. For instance, project PKFM1201 states as an outcome: “improved living conditions for conflict-affected IDPs”. Outputs are described as: “Conflict-affected families are in a better position to cope with the hardships of displacement through the provision of timely and appropriate NFIs”. However, the set template logframes do not require measurement indicators for NRC to assess to what extent living conditions had improved by the end of the project. Measurement indicators would need to be, for example: “percentage of beneficiaries who indicate that their living conditions have improved with NRC inputs”, which could be measured through post-distribution monitoring surveys under the ‘means of verification’ column. Outcomes must be documented through evidence-based monitoring.

Effectiveness Finding 4: ICLA programmes may have longer-term positive impact benefits

Legal Aid counselling has helped families obtain redress to property rights that will allow them to live their future lives without fear, according to beneficiaries interviewed. Information sessions leading to increased Computerised National Identity Card documentation will also have a positive impact on children who will be able to access education, which would not be possible without the Computerised National Identity Cards. Adults who have obtained these identity cards will experience long-term benefits from access to civil rights. Information counselling to Afghan refugees about repatriation procedures and Pakistan legislation regarding the future of refugees will help many to make informed decisions about their future that will have a longer-term impact on their lives.

Similarly, National Identity Cards allow access to subsidies such as the Benazir programme but, due to the focus on outputs, NRC has data on how many beneficiaries have obtained cards (output) – but not on how many have obtained such support with the help of their cards (outcome).

Effectiveness Finding 5: WASH interventions in the form of washroom provision and hygiene awareness training have been effective but not well-documented

The combination of these two activities has promoted safe hygienic practices and reduced the risk of disease, according to community leaders interviewed. However, the results have not been adequately documented with evidence-based monitoring. The effectiveness of WASH interventions needs to be assessed according to their ability to reduce hygiene-related illnesses (outcome), but NRC has not been able to produce baseline or periodic mortality and morbidity data to prove this. To assess results of WASH interventions a more focussed approach is needed to obtain this data from the outset of a programme and to monitor it regularly. Objectives described in the NRC Pakistan 2012 – 2014 Strategy: ‘Displaced households and vulnerable communities obtain increased access to wash facilities resulting in reduced incidences of communicable diseases and protection’ and ‘Displaced households and vulnerable communities dignity is enhanced through the promotion of hygiene messages reducing health risks and improvement of hygiene practices and behaviour’ will not be able to be measured objectively because NRC has not yet collected the data.

Effectiveness Finding 6: NRC staff need to link the ‘hardware’ of their engineering expertise to the ‘software’ of documenting programmes appropriately

A recurrent finding in this evaluation is the mismatch between staff competence in terms of implementing a project’s ‘hardware’ (building houses and water schemes) and the poor

record in translating how goals and modalities relate to results. Programme staff would appear to need more training on all aspects of project work, including how to write project proposals, reports and logframes, how to incorporate periodic monitoring and how to understand the kind of results that are needed from their actions in order to reflect the work they are doing. So far NRC has found it relatively easy to obtain funding for its projects but donors could be more exacting in their requirements for results-oriented documentation.

Effectiveness Finding 7: NRC coordinates well with other agencies

According to other humanitarian agencies interviewed³⁹, NRC activities are well-coordinated with other actors who provide different inputs in the same sites and housing designs are commensurate with Shelter Cluster decisions⁴⁰. NRC is an active member of the Return Task force and works closely with OCHA in articulating issues. It has filled an important gap by working in difficult-to-access areas where few other international non-government organisations are present. NRC is at the forefront of Shelter activities and discussions. The data it provides is reliable to the extent that other agencies have come to rely on NRC data over that of other sources⁴¹.

4.3 Efficiency

Efficiency Finding 1: NRC Pakistan has demonstrated systematic attention to cost of output

Several examples of this are as follows:

- ⌚ NRC conducts periodic cost comparisons with other agencies. For example, in 2011 NRC carried out a shelter analysis and cost comparison with all major agencies working for shelter projects in Pakistan. The analysis revealed that NRC's one room shelter with a kitchen and washroom was a less costly intervention compared with other agencies.
- ⌚ By estimating the overall beneficiary number for each programme, the cost per beneficiary can be calculated. In 2012, a total of 622,805 individuals are estimated to be assisted with an estimated budget of 82 million NOK. This leads to an average per-beneficiary cost of 132 NOK (approximately US\$ 24). Cost per beneficiary for a one room shelter is 1,791 NOK per beneficiary, for NFIs, 33 NOK, for ICLA, 59 NOK. The WASH breakdown is not given. NRC administration cost per beneficiary is 13 NOK.⁴² These are extremely competitive per beneficiary costs, which NRC has been able to achieve through economies of scale.
- ⌚ Project savings is achieved through economies of scale, i.e. bulk purchasing to cover several projects, where possible.
- ⌚ In 2011 NRC was able to exceed its beneficiary target due to savings from procurement of fewer tents, receiving some items from UNHCR, and construction of one-room shelters. The savings allowed NRC to provide for flood-affected IDPs in Kurram agency⁴³.
- ⌚ Where two or more projects are managed from the same country or field office, such as the case with Peshawar, NRC strives to minimise the running costs by sharing some of the expenditures among several projects. The same is the case for general management cost, such as finance, administration, logistics and similar.

³⁹ UNHCR, FDMA, OCHA interviews.

⁴⁰ Interview with UNHCR.

⁴¹ Interview with UNHCR.

⁴² NRC-PKFM1202-PKFS-1202-188082-PKFT1202-Revised Proposal to NMFA, March 2012.

⁴³ PKFM1102 final report.

Efficiency Finding 2: NRC has efficiently managed its operational activities and human resources, developing control mechanisms that track progress and correct deficiencies

NRC has developed a network of systems that indicate a concern for efficiency at all levels of management and programme implementation. According to staff interviewed, the systems generate the data they need to assess and follow costs, ensuring that efficient programming, procurement and delivery are at the forefront of staff awareness. The systems examined also generate clear and transparent project documents, global Standard Operating Procedures for every aspect of work (procurement, finance, distribution etc.) have been adapted to Pakistani conditions. There are pre-set templates to allow comparison across projects and sectors. Cost-tracking at field office level is done by project managers working closely with finance managers who alert them to any deviation from the implementation plan. However, the evaluation considers that it would be desirable for Project Managers to have more timely access to their project costs in order to check ongoing expenditure individually and to plan ahead.

Furthermore, current use of cost data is focused on deviations from budget only. Such practice is appropriate when programming is implemented by cost-responsible contractors to a large extent (which is the case today in for example shelter programming).

However, NRC is discussing reducing their dependence on contractors in favour of more NRC-beneficiary co-implementation of programs. Such a change in strategy would shift concern for cost follow-up from the procurement function or external contractor to line managers. The character of follow-up would shift from checking that contractors are fulfilling contracts to keeping track of costs in actual implementation (broadly “conducting inspection on a shelter before agreeing to pay” compared to “negotiating and following up on the costs of all inputs for each shelter while simultaneously supervising the relationship with community members assisted”). This would be a significant increase in complexity. The system provides sufficient data for such follow-up but managers would require additional training to understand how best to use the data for cost follow-up rather than mere budget deviation follow-up.

Efficiency Finding 3: The volume of data generated by NRC field offices is too much for the HO Oslo staff to handle efficiently

NRC field offices transmit financial data generated by the Agresso system to NRC HO in Oslo. Here, the high number of programmes and financial data generated are multiplying strains on the staff to monitor and control them efficiently. Financial oversight has to rely on spot-checks rather than systematic analysis. However, NRC Field staff say that if NRC Oslo finds anomalies in financial data, they query it to the field office and request a satisfactory response before approving the report – but this is only if NRC Oslo ‘catches’ the anomaly in a spot check.

Efficiency Finding 4: Inter-office synergies promote efficiency but can be time-consuming

Programme, finance, monitoring and evaluation, administration and logistics systems are well linked to each other but can take up a significant portion of daily work in the field. The systems, while relevant and necessary, can lead to delays in implementation. For example, project reports indicated that contractor and procurement requirements for the one-room shelter construction delayed implementation of activities, causing a re-organisation of priorities to get the project completed on time. On the other hand, the staff should have recognised the timing required for preparatory planning for such a project and the delays it occasioned could have been more realistically anticipated.

Efficiency Finding 5: NRC programmes are closely integrated with each other, promoting efficiency and coherence across sectors.

Programmes are clearly linked: the NFI and tents projects that assist IDPs during displacement are linked to return assistance such as permanent shelter construction and WASH, according to evaluation interviews, observations and project documents reviewed. Synergies not only improve overall efficiency but also constitute the sectors of most relevance to beneficiaries in responding to their most pressing needs.

Efficiency Finding 6: Beneficiary targeting is not always in line with intentions

Beneficiary interviews give a mixed picture of efficient and effective beneficiary targeting, with a high number of respondents indicating their belief that many vulnerable families have been omitted and less-deserving families included. However, other sources and project documents show that NRC devotes considerable time to beneficiary targeting and verification through consultative processes and using the Beneficiary Selection Format to select the most vulnerable.

Efficiency Finding 7: NRC interventions are governed by close consultations with stakeholders

NRC partners interviewed attest to close consultations and coordination to ensure that programmes are efficiently incorporated into country priorities. For example, the beneficiary selection format for permanent shelter was finalised after consultation with political administration, FDMA, return communities and other stakeholders. NRC works closely with UNHCR to ensure programmatic synergies, cost-efficiencies and optimum distribution of the project assets of both agencies.

Efficiency Finding 8: NRC staff are well-trained and motivated

NRC staff are well-trained, through mandatory induction courses on recruitment and periodic training or refresher courses that meet the demands of their work. Interviews with several international and national staff revealed their views that NRC is a 'good employer', providing career advancement possibilities and re-training on new competencies. Several of the key informants interviewed quoted NRC staff training and development policies as key to their appreciation of the organisation as an employer. The NRC's National Management Training Programme (NMTP) is highly valued. Analysis of high staff turnover some years ago led NRC to adjust health and pension benefits, changes which have led to staff loyalty and a low turnover of national staff. Many staff interviewed indicated their appreciation for "the NRC way"⁴⁴, which can be loosely defined as an institutional culture of professionalism, transparency and consultation – found also to be appreciated by staff in the Somalia country case study of this evaluation. Several staff said they had left government positions to join NRC given its reputation for 'getting things done' and allowing them to make a meaningful impact in their jobs. Although only 10% of overall staff are female, part of the reason women say they want to work with NRC is because they are treated so well.

Efficiency Finding 9: Internal policies could be more efficiently respected:

Some staff noted that, while there are many good internal policies which make sense for efficient office administration, some of these are not adequately respected. For instance, staff members mentioned that office working hours were not respected and management had needed to take action to improve this. They indicate that more frequent staff sensitisation to respect policies could make a difference. The NRC Pakistan 2012-2014 Strategy acknowledges that: 'Overall there is a lack of good human resource within Pakistan therefore increasing staff capacity and staff diversity in the mission would be a priority. There would be a focus on strengthening skills to ensure greater capacity and retention of core staff'. This evaluation would agree with the need for such capacity-building. For example, while there is a theoretical institutional focus on monitoring and evaluation as evidenced in NRC's Policy Paper (May 2012) Evaluation Policy (2005), Global Monitoring system adherence to Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) and establishment of new M&E departments

⁴⁴ Referred to and defined in the *Organizational Review of the Norwegian Refugee Council*, Norad, 2009.

in field locations, NRC Pakistan has yet to develop its capacities in this realm, evidenced by its inability to produce relevant documentation for this evaluation's purposes.

It should be noted that staff interviewed have good backgrounds for their positions, including relevant academic degrees and impressive experience in Government service and relevant NGOs and agencies. Similarly, systems and policies in place are generally appropriate. The challenge is to blend staff capacities with existing tools and structures in a way that ensures continued development towards planning, implementation and follow-up of a quality commensurate to the organisation's potential.

Efficiency Finding 10: Efficient fund raising enables a holistic support package to beneficiaries

NRC is a successful fundraiser, evidenced by its diverse donor base, and proactively seeks new opportunities to secure funding stability across its operational areas. Multi-sector programming, possible only with secure, multi-year contributions, has offered efficiency in providing families with a holistic support package and has afforded economies of scale in the use of supply chain and support staffing. Due to its dependence on project funding, NRC remains very vulnerable to changes in donor policies and politics however.

Efficiency Finding 11: NRC's budgets for Pakistan are heavy on project support and administration costs

The actual amount of project funds accruing to beneficiaries in project PKFK1102 (studied for the PETS) is only just over 50%. This can be compared with a project in another country case study, SDFS1101, where direct costs on behalf of beneficiaries are only 40%, and project SOFS1101 where they are roughly 60%. These costs demonstrate the price of interventions in fragile states where many of the activities are service-oriented, such as staffing and security-related. NRC's policy of minimising expatriate presence limits overheads but can only be driven so far. Given operational requirements, contextual issues related to national staff safety and donor requirements, image etc., an expatriate presence in certain key functions is likely to be necessary for the foreseeable future.

4.4 Sustainability

Sustainability Finding: Some NRC programmes are connected and sustainable

Emergency interventions such as immediate assistance to IDPs aim to save lives, then move into a different response modality. Sustainability of such projects is not a necessary element since the intervention itself is one-off and time-specific. NRC programming assists IDPs during their displacement while linking them to durable solutions by re-constructing permanent shelters and community water systems, enabling them to achieve self-sufficiency. However, there are still many IDPs who are waiting to benefit from such assistance and it will be some time before NRC can close its project. ICLA projects have similarly helped beneficiaries overcome their problems and become self-sufficient but there are still many for whom ICLA remains necessary to helping them find such solutions. Beneficiaries attest to NRC's training on information and legal aid to having helped them solve their problems on their own. Beneficiaries also stated that NRC's disaster risk reduction training has helped them become more resilient and self-sufficient in addressing future crises.

4.5 Cross-cutting issues

4.5.1 Environment

Environment Finding: Institutional awareness for the environment is lacking

The evaluation found no evidence that programming takes environmental considerations into account.

4.5.2 Gender, Age and Diversity

Gender Finding: NRC projects and institutional policies aim to achieve greater gender balance

The evaluation found several examples to demonstrate NRC Pakistan's proactivity in taking women's concerns into account:

- ⌚ Specific items for women and children in NFI packages – to the extent that male beneficiaries state the NFI packages are not useful to them, only to women and children.
- ⌚ ICLA programmes assist women to seek legal redress on property issues, resolving many cases in favour of women through culturally appropriate approaches.
- ⌚ Beneficiary targeting is particularly geared to seeking out vulnerable women of all ages, even though some may be missed due to their 'invisibility' in society.
- ⌚ Although NRC female staff cannot travel to areas in FATA, through community consultations and local partners who can employ women, NRC is able to identify and assist women. However, much remains to be done in this area due to the cultural constraints in FATA that keep women – a large majority of the most vulnerable – out of sight and unable to express their concerns.
- ⌚ NRC is committed to building up a female staff cadre – although recruitment of women is still far off gender parity.
- ⌚ In a highly politicised environment agencies are often pressured by local officials to give to those less deserving but affiliated to the 'right' party. NRC's policy of openness and transparency, coupled with good relations built with the authorities – including the military – have managed to minimise this pressure, enabling it to target the most vulnerable beneficiaries, including women, and secure access to them.
- ⌚ According to staff interviewed, all beneficiaries have undergone strict needs assessments procedures, including a gender analysis (no examples provided to the evaluation), to inform project design and allow gender-sensitive programming. This includes female-specific NFIs and training environments for counsellors who cater to the needs of women and female children. Care has been taken to hire female staff from within the target areas. The NRC global policy on Gender is used by field staff as a guiding document, according to interviews with staff, and efficient procedures are in place to include women where necessary and possible.

However, the NRC Country Strategy for 2012-2014 notes that gender-based violence, including sexual violence, has been reported through other humanitarian agencies in areas of NRC's operations. Due to cultural sensitivities the reports are impossible to verify or respond to. NRC should use its considerable influence to enact cautious but persistent advocacy.

Children remain one of the prime beneficiaries of NRC ICLA activities in Peshawar where assistance is given to them by facilitating their parents with the provision of birth certificates, inclusion of newly born in the Proof of Registration cards of their parents, provision and attestation of their educational documents from relevant departments in Pakistan and court representation in guardianship cases. In addition the resolution of the property cases also benefited children in order to provide them a safe and secure living environment. ICLA teams also focus on creating awareness among the communities for providing care and support to the child headed households and including them in activities that were beneficial to them.

Beneficiaries interviewed were of the opinion that NRC does not do enough to assist the elderly and disabled in its shelter programmes.⁴⁵

All the interventions i.e. Shelter, ICLA, NFIs, and DRR are according to our needs, however, I am disabled and the wash room constructed in my home is not feasible for me to be used due to disability. I recommend that NRC should consider disability factors in its activities.

Beneficiary interviewed in Nowshera, Nov. 2012.

4.5.3 Corruption

Corruption Finding: NRC staff are sensitive to potential diversion of funds or assets whether project or administration-related given that they work in environments where corruption is endemic

NRC project proposals and reports all carry the statement:

“NRC operations are generally vulnerable to corruption due to the fact that they are located in some of the most corrupt countries in the world. To counter this threat, NRC undertakes active anti-corruption work. NRC has developed guidelines on finance, logistics and Anti-Corruption. All staff signs a Code of Conduct and staff trainings are undertaken”.

Staff members interviewed described the elaborate system of checks and balances in NRC procedures. Staff are guided by NRC’s logistics, procurement and ethics guidelines, both at the Regional and Field levels. The tight procedures and system of checks and balances between Field and Regional offices reduce the risk of corruption, according to project and finance staff interviewed, but it cannot be completely ruled out. Likely sources are suppliers and ‘gatekeepers’ (community leaders). According to finance, logistics, procurement and administrative staff, all are involved to a degree in tracking payments. Suppliers receive training and regular awareness talks that sensitise them to NRC’s zero tolerance policy on corruption.

4.6 Additional Issues (Accountability, LRRD⁴⁶)

4.6.1 Accountability

Accountability is assessed here as both accountability to beneficiaries and to donors.

Accountability Finding 1: NRC instils institutional awareness in its staff to ensure accountability to beneficiaries.

Several examples demonstrate NRC’s transparency and openness towards beneficiaries. Evidence of this can be seen from documents showing:

- ⌚ participation of beneficiaries in assessments and monitoring, including the views of women, youth, elderly and disabled, according to beneficiaries interviewed;
- ⌚ easy-to-read drawings handed out to beneficiaries showing items they should receive in each distribution package, e.g. ‘brushers’ for illiterate women;
- ⌚ sensitisation campaigns informing beneficiaries what the project can and cannot deliver, according to beneficiary interviews.

Accountability Finding 2: However, no formal beneficiary feedback mechanisms yet exist in Pakistan

⁴⁵ DRR refers to Disaster risk reduction.

⁴⁶ Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development.

Programme staff indicate that these have not yet been put in place because an elaborate system of follow-up is necessary, which staff have not yet been trained to address. Once such training has been conducted, the office will set up an appropriate mechanism to address beneficiary grievances. Meanwhile, beneficiaries uniformly indicate that they have regular interaction with NRC staff, either through their committees or directly, and can discuss any grievances openly.

A system based on a 'hotline' number is being established. The number is registered. During the evaluation visit work was in progress to develop Standard Operating Procedures for handling complaints. The intention was to disseminate the number to beneficiaries as soon as registration and follow-up procedures had been put in place.

Accountability Finding 3: Accountability to donors is demonstrated

Staff are aware of cost-drivers and, according to interviews, staff have sought cost-efficiency in project inputs, e.g. provision of cost-efficient shelters, cost analyses and programme synergies that can reduce costs.

4.6.2 LRRD and Exit Strategies

LRRD Finding: Exit strategies are not often considered, durable solutions are

In general exit strategies are not considered in programme design. Nevertheless, NRC's relief programming is often linked to durable solutions, as noted under 'sustainability' above. Its future strategy aims to ensure capacity building of local staff to take on senior positions and of local partners to strengthen and prepare them to take over certain activities when NRC phases out. It also aims to engage in joint efforts with more development-oriented activities and local organisations to take over from NRC at a later stage when conditions are feasible⁴⁷.

4.6.3 Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

DRR Finding 1: Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness sessions with IDPs have been relevant

Beneficiaries in Nowshera attested to the usefulness of DRR training provided by NRC to help communities prepare for future disasters. This is a topic in which NRC should strive for full caseload coverage given the prevalence of disasters in Pakistan and the resonance it appears to have for beneficiaries. Asked what they had applied from their information sessions with NRC many beneficiaries replied:

"DRR training enabled me how to react in disaster situation. I made an evacuation plan for my family in case of floods based on NRC DRR training".

"Based on DRR training we have chalked out a plan for our village in case of possible floods"

Beneficiary interviews, Nowshera, Nov. 2012.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

⁴⁷ NRC Pakistan 2012 – 2014 Strategy document

Overall Conclusion

Within the framework of 'enhancing protection and promoting the rights of displaced people in humanitarian need', NRC has been able to implement relevant programmes efficiently and effectively, using a wide array of strategies and tools to maintain access to beneficiaries to deliver relevant goods and services – with some shortcomings.

Systemic issues related to the rapid expansion of NRC operations in the country have strained support systems but appear to have been managed during the period studied. Given the significant expansion in volume of activities and geographical spread over the evaluation period, NRC has managed the necessary expansion of support systems admirably. Current needs include further stabilisation of systems and an increased attention to quality.

a) NFI Distribution: NRC responded to beneficiary needs after conducting needs assessments with the participation of IDPs and local committees. Some targeting issues have emerged from interviews with beneficiaries, due mainly to new arrivals where beneficiary selection had already taken place and to the 'invisibility' of women in areas of Pakistan where it is difficult to reach them directly. The mobile phones were particularly appreciated and fulfilled a protection function by providing needed communications between families and reducing travel costs for people with little means.

b) Shelter: Shelter interventions have been relevant, efficient and effective, well-coordinated with other actors, according to stakeholder interviews. NRC has given careful consideration to evolving beneficiary needs, providing tents in the aftermath of emergencies and linking displacement to durable solutions by the construction of permanent shelters for returnees. NRC is a valued partner of the Pakistan authorities and the UN, and an active member of several Shelter and Return consortia. Comments about design from beneficiaries indicate room for improvement in some cases and NRC takes lessons learned into future projects – but do not always have the resources to correct mistakes in work that has already been completed.

c) WASH: This has been a relevant intervention so far but needs scaling up to fully meet beneficiary needs and protect families from health-related problems. In conjunction with hygiene awareness and outreach training, it is maintaining a minimum of hygiene in IDP sites. NRC has not adapted washrooms in newly-constructed shelters to disabled and elderly people, nor has it connected toilets to sewerage or, the absence of such, other waste disposal systems. Evidence of outcomes is lacking for all sectors: given the need to combine material support with behavioural change and community based maintenance this systemic gap is perhaps most serious in WASH. Outcomes could be measured from health indicators before and after the intervention, but this has not been planned in project documents.

d) ICLA: A unique programme of high relevance to the Pakistan context, ICLA has enabled IDPs to obtain key civilian documents lost in their flight, ensuring them access to their civil rights. It has helped Afghan refugees make informed decisions as to their future strategies and to help find legal solutions for women and children who would otherwise have had no redress. An important function of ICLA has been to train national organisations to take over from NRC in the future by mentoring them with on-the-job training. However, the evaluation team found no evidence that this is yet happening.

e) Gender and Disability: NRC itself recognises the challenges of accessing women to ensure that the relevance and effectiveness of its programmes can reach their full potential. However, it has ensured that at least the composition of its NFI packages is useful to women and girls. The lack of any female staff in formal and informal monitoring systems is serious given that they would not be able to talk about their concerns with male monitors. Only sustained advocacy will redress this situation over time. NRC still has a long way to go in recruiting women to its offices. Judging from beneficiary feedback in this evaluation, more needs to be done to take into account the needs of disabled beneficiaries, especially with regard to toilet access, and to ensure they are able to access their aid entitlements even if they cannot go to distribution sites.

f) Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development and Exit Strategies: NRC is aware of the need for exit strategies and although the organisation has put some in place for handover to national organisations (e.g. ICLA), most planning for exit is rudimentary at best. NRC's planning documents and project submissions do indicate some awareness, but in practice very much remains to be done. Meanwhile, reconstructing damaged or destroyed housing along with WASH interventions for IDPs provides a link between relief activities, such as tent and NFI distribution, and early recovery. Plans to engage in livelihood activities in return areas in future will reinforce durable solutions, along with continued advocacy to development organisations.

g) Disaster Risk Reduction: The limited activities undertaken to date in this field have been effective, according to beneficiaries, but this theme needs to be expanded and mainstreamed into all projects as a way to build community and individual resilience in disaster-prone areas more systematically.

h) Accountability to Beneficiaries: Project monitoring ensures that grievances can be heard but there is little evidence that these have been acted on. Beyond interaction with field staff there are no formal beneficiary feedback mechanisms to date and these should be implemented at the earliest opportunity.

i) Accountability to donors: NRC has effective strategies to minimise corruption in its corporate dealings with partners and internally. However, more needs to be done to prove that its projects are bearing evidence-based results.

j) Outcomes: Project documents (narratives, logframes and reports) do not place enough emphasis on tracking outcomes, requirements being more geared to outputs. Shelter outcomes may be complex to assess, given the variety of factors that might attribute improvement or deterioration, but NRC could make more use of beneficiary interviews and monitoring to identify concrete evidence that the interventions have been successful.

k) Monitoring and evaluation: recent efforts to introduce monitoring and evaluation in programming are commendable and appropriate but more needs to be done. The previous absence of a systematic monitoring and evaluation function reflects a serious organisational gap.

5.2 Recommendations

a) Targeting needs closer attention:

NRC could be more alert to beneficiary grievances of incorrect targeting and follow up complaints. Regular beneficiary verification surveys are needed to minimise or rectify erroneous targeting. This should include post-distribution follow-up.

b) Gender: Female monitoring staff should be prioritised in recruitment

Female staff should be prioritised in recruitment. If, in coming years, the feared reduction in donor support becomes a reality, retrenchment is likely. Retaining existing female staff should be a priority in that process if it materialises.

c) Disaster Risk Reduction should be mainstreamed in NRC projects:

DRR activities should be extended to more people in return and 'stayee' areas where disasters are likely to occur, to improve community resilience. Activities such as training on disaster preparedness, community consultations to determine any infrastructural improvements that could help reduce disaster risks and liaison with Pakistan Red Crescent

Society to conduct community DRR, should be undertaken with clear outcomes and measurement indicators to determine their effectiveness.

d) Accountability to Beneficiaries: Systems should be put in place to solicit beneficiary feedback.

Beneficiary feedback needs to be systematically documented and followed up. Regular monitoring visits are useful in allowing beneficiaries to express grievances but they need to be followed up and any rectification measures should be communicated to the aggrieved parties.

e) Outcomes: Results, not activities, should be focus of planning and follow-up

NRC should place more emphasis on results-based programming by focussing more on outcomes in project proposal narratives, logframes and reports. This in turn would place greater onus on field staff to obtain baseline data against which to measure outcomes through monitoring. Results, not activities, should be the focus of planning.

f) The system replacing the Core Activities Database should be established in Peshawar with commensurate training activities to project staff

The NRC monitoring tool which is being put in place to replace the Core Activities Database should be rolled out at the earliest opportunity to allow project managers to follow project implementation more closely and remedy shortcomings at an early stage. Local adaptation should be part of that process.

g) WASH: WASH programmes should be scaled up

WASH programmes should be scaled up in all NRC country programmes where there is an NRC Shelter component and where other actors are not available or willing to undertake them. Beneficiaries have expressed a clear indication that more water schemes are needed in their sites of displacement or return and, with WASH now as a core competency, it needs to be brought up to scale. A first priority is to ensure disability features in individual shelter toilets, where necessary, and to ensure also that toilet waste is safely evacuated. This should be undertaken in shelters that NRC has already constructed.

h) Monitoring and Evaluation systems need to be more robust

The Programme Development Unit (PDU) needs to strengthen project monitoring by introducing systems such as post-distribution monitoring and Knowledge, Attitude and Practice surveys which would enhance programmatic quality control, as well as systematically conducting baseline surveys (or having these from other sources) against which to measure progress. NRC recognises the need for all of this as well as the need to increase staff capacity on the processes and methodologies. The evaluation commends NRC for its intention to develop indicators for possible diversion of aid, usefulness of aid, selling of aid, beneficiary selection, access to aid etc. to promote a holistic approach to programme development.

i) Work plans should factor in more realistic time for planning, community interviews and possible delays

Given the time needed for planning, beneficiary/community interviews and the likelihood of delays in construction activities, NRC should design its Work plans with more realistic timeframes to avoid having to rush activities in order to complete them on time.

Annex 1: List of Interviews

Type of interview: Ind = Individual interview, Gp = Group interview. M = Male, F = Female

Name	Sex	Organisation	Title/Role	Date	Location	Type
Amjad Ali Khan	M	NRC	Head of FATA program	121119	Peshawar	Ind
IDPs in Charsadda	M	IDP Committee and Community	Community members & representatives	121116	Charsadda	Gp 19M
IDPs in Charsadda	F	IDP Community	Community members	121116	Charsadda	Ind 3F
IDPs in Charsadda	F	IDP Community	Community members	121116	Charsadda	FGD 30F
Fawad Aamin	M	UNHCR	Protection Officer Protection Cluster Lead	121121	Peshawar	Ind
IDPs in Ghari Momin	M	IDP Committee and Community	Community members & representatives	121117	Nowshera	Gp 25M
IDPs in Nowshera	F	IDP Community	Community members	121117	Nowshera	Ind 10 F
Ibrahim Yar Muhammed	M	NRC	Program Development Coordinator	121116	Peshawar	Ind
Israr Ahmad Safi	M	NRC	Acting Finance Administration Manager	121117	Peshawar	Ind
Junaid Ghani	M	UNHCR	IT Associate responsible for digital registration	121121	Peshawar	Ind
Khalid Ilyas	M	Federal Disaster Management Authority	Director	121121	Peshawar	Ind
Khalida Akbari	F	NRC	HR Coordinator	121119	Peshawar	Ind
Masood Ahmed Jan	M	NRC	Project Coordinator Nowshera/ Charsadda	121120	Peshawar	Ind
Muhammad Imran Muhammad Rafique Abdul Wajid Imran Khan Mustaq Ahmad Sadia Rani	M M M M M F	NRC	Team Leaders	121119	Peshawar	Gp
Muhammed Ahre Khalid Abbis Asif Taj Awan	M M M	NRC	Team leaders; Emergency response ICLA/Education ICLA	121118	Peshawar	Gp
IDPs in Prang	M	IDP Committee and Community	Community members & representatives	121118	Charsadda	Gp 25M
Sadia Rani	F	NRC	Acting Program Manager ICLA	121119	Peshawar	Ind
Saeedullah Khan	M	NRC	Country Director	121115 121116	Islamabad Peshawar	Ind
Rokibul Alam	M	NRC	Program Support Manager	121117	Peshawar	Ind
Tom Otieno Otunga	M	OCHA	Humanitarian Affairs Officer	121120	Peshawar	Ind

Yodit Mulugata	F	NRC	Program manager Shelter (incl WASH)	121116 121120	Peshawar	Ind
Zartasha Qaisar Khan	F	NRC	Acting Program Director/ Program Manager ICLA	121121	Peshawar	Ind
Zel Mengistu Ubaid Ullah Sikander Azam	M M M	UNHCR	Shelter Expert Engineer Cluster coordinator	121119	Peshawar	Gp
Zia ur Rehman Waqar Maroof	M M	Commissionerate for Afghan Refugees	Commissioner Additional Commissioner	121120	Peshawar	Gp

Respondents PETS Pakistan			Male	Female	Total
NRC Staff: Peshawar Office			8	2	10
Ibrahim Yar Muhamad	PDU Coordinator	Male			
Israr Ahmad	Deputy Finance Manager	Male			
Ayaz ur Rehman	Finance Officer-Bank payments	Male			
Sajid Sarwar	Finance Officer-Data control	Male			
Tehmina Awan	Finance Assistant-Cash	Female			
Asad Jan	Finance Assistant - Field	Male			
Mohammad Hayat	Finance Officer	Male			
Sadia Rani	ICIA-Program Officer	Female			
Abid Ali	Finance Assistant- Archives	Male			
Hassan Manzoor	Finance Officer-Agresso	Male			
NRC Distribution officers: Jaloza Camp			6	0	6
Shahid Rehman	Distribution Officer	Male			
Amjad Khattak	Distribution Officer	Male			
Imtiaz Ahmad	Distribution Assistant	Male			
Shukaib Raz	Distribution Assistant	Male			
Changaiz	Distribution Assistant	Male			
Wajes Ahmad	Distribution Assistant	Male			
IDPs in Bajaur Agency, Zorbandar village			25	0	25
IDPs in Bajaur Agency, Delay village			18	0	18
IDPs in Rashakay village			22	0	22
IDPs in Jaloza Camp			45	22	67
IDP Committee members (elders council Jaloza)			18	0	18
Most Vulnerable Group: IDPs with disabilities			14	0	14
Total Beneficiary Respondents			142	22	164
Total Respondents (PETS)			156	24	180

Annex 2: Document review

Prior to the field phase:

The country case study started with a review of internet resources, both NRC and external, describing and analysing the general situation in Pakistan or thematically. A total of 35 documents were reviewed. A cross-section of these includes:

- ⌚ UN Consolidated Appeals (Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plans) for the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 (OCHA), showing the evolution of the humanitarian crises and recovery activities in Pakistan over the evaluation period and NRC's relevance in responding to these. These documents illustrate the extent to which agencies are obliged to work through the Government of Pakistan federal and local bodies, for example: mandatory prior approval of all 'Relief' related projects by the Provincial Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement Authority (PaRRSA); while for the 'Early Recovery' related projects, by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA)/PaRRSA or the Cluster Lead Agency counterpart co-chair of the Government system authorised by PaRRSA; opening of an 'assignment account' in the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) for each project in which a Government Agency is the implementing partner; procurement of the goods and services through open bidding (widely circulated in the press under intimation to PaRRSA⁴⁸) in a transparent and open manner to ensure fair price; joint monitoring of each project by the Cluster Lead and the Executive District Officer (EDO) concerned or the provincial Government Department/ FATA Secretariat/ Agency; and final evaluation by the Provincial Government.
- ⌚ International Crisis Group reports on Pakistan, June and October 2012;
- ⌚ Draft document of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on 'Accountability to Affected Populations: An Operational Framework, showing recent developments in tightening standards of accountability;
- ⌚ ALNAP's "LRRD: Review of the Debate", 2005 research into LRRD issues;
- ⌚ The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) 2007 and 2010 'Accountability Benchmarks';
- ⌚ NRC policy documents: Gender, Programmes, Corruption, Evaluation; Financial Handbook; Exit Strategy Guide, and others, to identify the institutional framework within which NRC staff must operate;
- ⌚ "Gender-Sensitive Response and Recovery", Oxfam, 2012;
- ⌚ "Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response to Pakistan's 2010 Floods Crisis", Dara, 2011;
- ⌚ "Organisational Review of the NRC", Norad review, 2009;
- ⌚ "Information, Counselling and Legal Assistance in Pakistan and Afghanistan, NRC evaluation, 2009;
- ⌚ Report of the ICLA Advisor's visit to Pakistan, August 2011;
- ⌚ NRC Pakistan Fact Sheet, 2011, for a general overview of NRC's activities in Pakistan;
- ⌚ NRC Country Strategy documents, showing the progression of activities from 2010 to 2012;
- ⌚ Project proposals listed above, including details required by different donors and complexity of proposals and reports, to demonstrate the work that goes into preparing these documents by the Country and Headquarter offices;

⁴⁸ Provincial Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Settlement Authority

- ⌚ Work Status of 300 Permanent Shelters – Nowshera, 26Sep2012; this document provides an overview of geographical locations of shelters and numbers planned in each location, material inputs and status of the work;
- ⌚ Pakistan Cluster policy documents;
- ⌚ Multi-year/ annual strategy proposals and annual progress reports covering the years under review;
- ⌚ The NRC website www.nrc.no - for an overview on NRC's mission, standards and policies, and many others.

These documents set the context and provided a basis on which the evaluators could see what NRC and other humanitarian actors had achieved (or failed to achieve) in the past with which to compare activities over the period covered.

During the evaluation

A large number of project documents were made available by NRC Oslo and Pakistan Country Office. A sample of these include: assessment reports, project proposals, logframes, reports and internal checklists to follow funding, reporting and financial data inputs.

The above documents are mainly project specific and provided the team with insights into how NRC staff use guidelines, policies, activities, reports and monitoring for project activities. However, it would have been useful to review specific baseline documents, such as surveys or studies on nutritional and health status, water distribution systems in return areas and housing, land and property issues, which could have enabled an assessment of project outcomes. NRC either did not have these or did not make them available, despite several detailed requests. A complete bibliography is included in Annex 3.

Annex 3: List of Documents, Pakistan

(The list may contain duplicates)

Published documents and public sources

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